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WAVES.

BY J. F.

See the wavelets on the smooth and yellow sand!
How they gaily chase each other tow'rds the land!
How they softly, brightly glance
In the clear and golden light,
And how merrily they dance
Onward in their mimic fight,
Now rising, leaping, falling,
Pausing now and onward rolling,
While their bent and curling heads fall left and right!

See the big waves on the rough and rocky coast!
How they wildly foam and boil—a countless host!
How they rudely, loudly dash
On the bleak and sullen shore,
And how angrily they lash,
Rage and rush with deaf'ning roar,
Now upward sailing proudly,
Now downward crashing loudly,
As before the blast their stormy masses pour!

Fettered, Yet Free.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LIKE UNTO A STAR," "BRUNA'S STORY," "A GIRL'S DESPAIR," "TWICE MARRIED," ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER I.—(CONTINUED.)

MRS. GEITH smiled; there had been something very comical in the old man's abrupt change of manner, and the mingled surprise and contempt at his own earnestness, which were plainly visible on his face. Cecil Lestrange was looking at him now with a strange, quiet, fixed attention in her beautiful, sad, grey eyes.

"Thank you, Mr. Bevan," she said, suddenly extending her hand with a pretty gesture which had a touch of queenliness about it; "I shall remember your words,—thank you for them. I am young still," she went on with a little tremor in her pretty, low voice, "and perhaps life may have some good things for me in the future; and"—she lifted her hands to her eyes and hid them for a moment, as if she wished to shut out some unpleasant or painful sight—"if I have sinned, I have suffered; and—and my temptation was very great."

Her eyes were hidden, so she did not see how he glanced at her quickly and strangely, and drew away a little. Mrs. Geith saw the movement, and her proud lips closed more firmly and her eyes flashed angrily.

"Then I will see about this house for you," Mr. Bevan said quietly, after a momentary pause. "It has been empty for some time, and it will be a little amusement to you both to order furniture, and so on. The owner will be glad to get a good tenant, I am sure, because he is not very rich, squire and lord of the manor though he is. I will let you know as soon as ever I hear from his agent."

"Thank you," Mrs. Geith said quietly. "We can but try it. If—if we don't like it we can leave."

"Of course! of course! That is one of the advantages of plenty of money, Mrs. Geith. You may change your mind as often as you like."

"What will you say to this agent, Mr. Bevan?" Miss Lestrange said quietly; she had seated herself, and leaned back, very pale and calm, in the old armchair.

He looked at her keenly.

"I will say that a client of mine wants such a house for herself and her sister; that she is able and willing to pay liberally for it, and that she wishes to enter as soon as it can be got ready," he answered promptly.

"And—and you will say nothing else?" she asked, even her lips white as she asked the question.

"Certainly not. There is nothing else which need be said."

A little sigh of intense relief came slowly from the white lips; her head sank back against the faded damask of her chair; she thanked him with a gesture for the words which gave her such intense relief.

There was a short silence, broken by the sound of the great clock in the neighboring tower as it chimed the quarter-to-six. Mr. Bevan rose hastily.

"I must be off," he said hurriedly, gathering up his papers and putting them into his bg, "or I shall miss my train; locomotion is difficult in this weather. Good-bye, Mrs. Geith, you shall hear from me in a day or two. Good afternoon!" he added, hesitating a little as he addressed Miss Lestrange, as if he were not sure how to address her.

She put out her little, chill hand and smiled at him with such a sweet, bewildering smile that, greyheaded old misogamist as he was, it made his heart beat more quickly.

"You do not think it wrong?" she said in a low tone, as the smile faded slowly, leaving her face very grave, very earnest, very sad.

"No, no," he said hastily, "certainly not: not wrong. No, no, not wrong. Good-bye!"

The next moment the door closed upon his retreating figure, and the sisters were alone.

For some minutes the silence was unbroken. Cecil had closed her eyes, and lay back white, and still, and motionless as a statue. Mrs. Geith, from her chair by the fire, was looking at her with a fixed, intent gaze, which the girl felt, although she gave no sign that she did so. Big Ben struck six, the slow, solemn strokes ringing loudly and clearly over every other sound. Cecil opened her beautiful, languid eyes.

"I hope Mr. Bevan has caught his train," she said smiling.

"I hope so too."

Something in Mrs. Geith's voice made her sister look at her quickly.

"What is it, Laura?" she asked hurriedly. "Do you not approve of the plan?"

"Yes, but——"

"Ah, that cruel little word," Cecil exclaimed passionately. "Laura, what else can we do? I am so young, and I have suffered so much. Let me have a chance of happiness again!"

"My darling!" Mrs. Geith had taken the trembling figure in her arms. "Do you think I would deprive you of a chance of happiness? Only—only I am afraid that instead of happiness,—misery may be the result!"

"Could any misery equal that we have already suffered?" Cecil asked wildly. "Oh, Laura, let us forget it!—let us be as if it had never happened! The past is past; let us wipe it out. Whatever the future holds for us, cannot be as what has been! Can it? And it may hold, as Mr. Bevan said, better things for us."

Yet the time was coming when the misery of the past seemed to Cecil Lestrange as a pin prick to a gunshot wound, when compared to the misery which followed—misery rendered all the deeper, all the more intense because she had brought it on herself, through her own sin!

CHAPTER II.

"You really think it advisable, Ware?"

"I most certainly do, Sir Hugh. This is not the first time—you will pardon me for reminding you,—this is not the first time I have said so."

Sir Hugh Danecourt laughed.

"Not by a great many," he said lightly; "not by a very great many! But no eligible tenant has turned up you see, and I don't feel quite convinced, even now!"

"And I don't understand you scruples and objection, Sir Hugh!"

The young man colored slightly.

"I don't myself either, Ware! Yet the objection exists and is a strong one."

The two men, Sir Hugh Danecourt and his friend and land agent, Jeffrey Ware, were standing together on the terrace before the drawing room windows of a quaint old Tudor house, facing the west, and left by the sun in shadow on that fair morning, early in April, on which Sir Hugh had strolled over from the park before breakfast, to confer with his agent as to the desirability of letting the Gate House.

It was not a large house or a grand one, but it was not without the charms of picturesqueness and antiquity; it was long and low, with heavily mullioned windows and gables, and a huge central chimney stack; the red brick of which it was built had deepened to a rich warm hue, which itself was enhanced by the rich verdure by which it was surrounded, and which made such a beautiful setting to the old house.

Below the terrace, on which the two men stood in the chill freshness of the spring morning, was a velvety green lawn, with two tall cedar trees rising boldly against the clear sky, and fringed with the sweet old-fashioned garden. Beyond these were field and pasture lands, bounded, in their turn, by the beautiful purple hills, at whose feet nestled a few pretty farmhouses.

Few houses were so beautifully situated as the Gate House. It was little matter that it was only divided from the road by a narrow strip of grass and a few tall elms; all the principal sitting rooms were at the back of the house, overlooking the terrace and the gardens and the hills, and on the terrace, and in those pretty old rooms, with their quaint windows and high mantel-pieces, one might easily forget that the Gate House was not miles away from the high road, and from any other habitation if one wished to do so.

Yet it was barely half-a-mile from the village, and it was built exactly opposite the great gates, guarded by a quaint stone lodge on either side, leading into Danecourt Park.

The two men strolling up and down the terrace were the only living creatures in sight, save the great Danish wolf hound following closely at Sir Hugh's heels; and the house had an air, not of dilapidation or desolation, but of forlornness. The grounds were kept in exquisite order, the house itself was not uncared for, but the closed windows and drawn blinds had a mournful look.

"It does no property good to be left untenanted," Jeffrey Ware said, as they sauntered slowly up and down; the agent's dapper little figure, clean shaven ruddy countenance and grey hair contrasting with Sir Hugh's tall, graceful form, proud, fair head, and neatly trimmed golden bread, as much as his semisporting, semifarmer attire did with Sir Hugh's faultlessly-cut grey tweed suit. "No matter how careful and attentive to their duties caretakers are, it is far better to have the house lived in. Besides the expenses of keeping up the grounds is not inconsiderable, and times are not such as to warrant unnecessary expenses."

An amused look crept into Sir Hugh's blue eyes.

"Now you are croaking, Ware," he said lightly. "Thank to your skilful management, neither the tenants or myself feel the bad times much."

"Still there is always a need of economy and retrenchment, Sir Hugh," replied the agent, smiling a little. "And you are so open-handed that——"

"You are obliged to be close-fisted to make up an average," rejoined Sir Hugh with a laugh, as he took out his cigar-case—a pretty dainty case, embroidered with his crest and monogram. "Have a cigar?"

"No, thank you, Sir Hugh—I never smoke before breakfast."

"You think it is a bad habit?" Sir Hugh remarked, as he struck a light on a little silver fusee-box he had taken from his pocket.

"Not so bad a one as keeping the Gate House empty, Sir Hugh," retorted the land-agent quickly; and the young man smiled quietly as he lighted his cigar.

"It is only a small matter, Ware," he said presently, as they stood still and looked over at the purple hills rising clearly against the sky—"a bare two hundred a-year."

"Two hundred a-year is not a large sum certainly, Sir Hugh, but it is not a very small one."

"What would two hundred a-year, or twice two hundred a-year, make up for the unpleasantness of having strangers in such close proximity?" Sir Hugh said rather languidly—"at our gates, Ware."

"Strangers are not necessarily unpleasant Sir Hugh," remarked the agent quietly.

"Neighbors are," replied Sir Hugh.

"You can hardly call people near neighbors who live a mile and more from your hall door, Sir Hugh!"

"I did not call them near neighbors," rejoined Sir Hugh with a twinkle in his handsome blue eyes. "But I might, as they would be fifty yards from my park gates!"

A little silence ensued. Sir Hugh, leaning in a lounging attitude against the stone balustrade which edged the terrace, puffed serenely at his cigar. Ware, standing very erect and stiff, with a little frown on his ruddy, pleasant countenance, looked moodily at the fair landscape stretching far and near before their eyes.

"Then I must refuse this offer, Sir Hugh?" he said presently, speaking in a dry, cold manner which showed that he was displeased.

"Don't be in a hurry," Sir Hugh answered smiling. "Just enumerate the advantages again like a good fellow. At present I can only realise the unpleasantness of having strangers at my gates, who may prove unsuitable acquaintances for the girls. You will own that in such a case their proximity would be anything but desirable."

"That is so very evident that I should never think of denying it, Sir Hugh," was the quiet reply. "I have never advised letting out the Gate House to any one but an unexceptionable tenant. As to the advantages they are numerous."

"Not too numerous to mention, I hope," said Sir Hugh carelessly.

Mr. Ware looked as if he thought the interruption frivolous, but went on quietly, without taking any other notice of it.

"One, and a great one, is that instead of being an expense, as it is now, the Gate House would become a source of income."

"So far, so good," remarked Sir Hugh smiling; for some reasons of his own he would or could not treat the subject with seriousness, but, perhaps, the careless indifference of his manner was only assumed to conceal some deeper feeling he wished to hide.

"At present, as I need scarcely remind you, Sir Hugh," pursued the agent quietly, "the keeping up of the house and grounds forms no inconsiderable item of expenditure, and, as I have already reminded you, there is always and everywhere a necessity for the reduction of unnecessary expenses."

"Undoubtedly; and in this case——"

"In this case," Ware interrupted eagerly, "there would not only be a clear two hundred a year added to your income, but these present expenses would be avoided."

"Very satisfactory, so far," Sir Hugh remarked laughing. "Go on, Ware; you seem well primed with arguments."

The land agent smiled.

"I daresay some of my shots will miss fire," he said good-humoredly; "but it shall not be my fault if they do. There can be no possible doubt," he went on, "that with a careful tenant the Gate House would be kept in far better order than it is at present. Many of the rooms now show evidences of their uninhabited condition."

A slight shadow darkened Sir Hugh Danecourt's handsome, expressive face; he raised himself from his lounging attitude, and threw away his cigar.

"I am sorry for that," he said gravely. "I have never been over it since poor Millie died. Still,—it is absurd, I daresay,—it would be very painful to me to see anyone in her home, Ware."

"That feeling would not last, Sir Hugh," answered the agent earnestly. "After the first few days it would wear away. I say this," he went on, looking over at the young man with a kind look in his keen, grey eyes, "knowing how dear your sister was to you and how sincerely you mourned her. After a little while you would lose that painful feeling, and derive a certain satisfaction from the knowledge that the house which was a home to your sister in her bereavement should be the home of one who is suffering from the same grief."

"Is that so?" Sir Hugh asked quickly. "Is this lady a widow?"

"Yes; her husband died abroad. She has no family, and her sister, who is an invalid, shares her home."

"They are old people?"

"I think not, Sir Hugh; middle-aged, I fancy."

There was another little silence, during which the clock in the steeple of the parish church half-a-mile away chimed out the half-hour after eight; the sound reached the two men on the terrace as it rang through the clear, still air.

Sir Hugh started a little, and lifting his cap from his forehead, pushed away his fair hair with a rather nervous gesture.

"Half-past eight," he said; "I must go in—the girls will be waiting breakfast. Come in, Ware; even if you have breakfasted, a cup of coffee won't hurt you."

"I'll go up to the Hall with you, Sir Hugh," answered the agent. "There are some papers in your study relating to Horne's lease which I want, but I won't take any more coffee this morning, I'm obliged to you—I've a horror of dyspepsia."

"Almost as great as you have of empty houses," rejoined Sir Hugh smiling, as they left the terrace, walked round to the front of the house, crossed the little grass-plot, passed out of the little gate, and entered the park by the great iron gates which had given the Gate House its name.

They walked up the drive almost in silence; the great avenue of horse-chestnuts was just donning its fair spring dress, and would presently burst into fuller beauty; the air was fresh and pure, but it had a touch of chilliness about it as it blew up from the sea.

Presently the house came in sight, so grey, so stately, so sombre, that but for the sunshine upon it, it might almost have been melancholy. As it was with the sunshine upon it, it looked the beau ideal of a stately English home.

It was a picturesque, historic house, with oak-panelled rooms and ancient stained-glass windows, and grass terraces, with stately grand old cedar trees, and a dim shadowy little chapel, and a charming garden room, which had always been a favorite with the ladies of the House of Danecourt.

It had oriel windows and great ivy-grown chimney stacks; and it was full of treasures of art, which had been gathered from generation after generation; and it was set in the heart of some beautiful beech-woods, older even than the house, although it had stood for fully three hundred years.

If the house itself were beautiful, its setting rendered it far more so, giving it some of its own rich, sombre loveliness. The woods and the park were always beautiful; in the spring with their rich, bright, young green attire, in the summer in their fuller leafage, in the autumn, when the leaves were changing to a glory of crimson, and russet, and gold, and orange, and in the winter, when the bare branches were laden with snow, or the boughs were glittering with the rime which sparkled in the wintry sunshine like diamonds, yes, the woods were always beautiful; no wonder that Hugh Danecourt and his sister rarely cared to leave them for the bricks and mortar and crowded thoroughfares of a great city.

Danecourt was not a show place, although it was not because of the selfishness of its owners that it was not so. They would have been, and were, pleased that the treasures of beauty and art contained in their old home should gratify others, and sometimes a chance visitor came and was gratified by a careful inspection of the dim old rooms; but it was quite out of the beaten tourist track, six miles from a station, and the pretty, quaint little village by the seaside was as yet unknown to fame and undiscovered even by artists.

A stranger there excited quite a furore among the inhabitants, and the Danecourts' friends were objects of intense interest to the simple village folk when they filled the big, square pew allotted to the squire's family, on Sunday morning.

Some of their friends wondered how Hugh Danecourt and the two sisters who were still at home could spend all their time in their stately old home without finding it very dull, for, though there were several other wealthy families in the neighborhood, they were rarely at home save in the shooting season or in the height of the summer; but the Danecourts only smiled at their surprise. They were never so happy as at home, and no London season could make up for absence from it.

The Danecourts had lived and died at Danecourt for many generations, and the annals of the family history held no record which the future generations would blush to read. Their men had been frank, and true, and brave; few brilliant scholars or distinguished scientists could be found among them truly; but they had been upright English gentlemen, of unstained honor, living pure and honest lives.

Their woman had been gentle and gracious, healthy, and beautiful, and good; no faithless wife or indifferent mother was to be found among them, no finger of scorn or derision had ever been pointed at them.

And as they had been in the past, so were they in the present, for the stately, picturesque, old house had never had a worthier master than its present squire, or sweeter mistresses than the two sisters who shared his home.

Danecourt, the Hall, was situated about a mile from Danecourt the village, but from more than one of the terraces a glimpse of the silver sea was obtainable, and its air always had a touch of the freshness which blows up from the water.

The village was small, and pretty, and quaint, nestling as it did in a cleft in the long line of cliffs, and cosily sheltered from storm and hurricane.

There was no poverty there, the Danecourts took care of that; the cottages were stoutly built, the people laborious and hard-working, and loyal to a man, woman and child to the family at the Hall.

The church was a substantial and not inelegant edifice, small, as befitted its congregation, whose spiritual needs were well looked after by the manly, vigorous young vicar, who lived in the cosy vicarage, built under the shadow of the church, and who had been a staunch friend and comrade of Hugh Danecourt's at college.

It was almost a straight road from the great gates of the park to the church, and on that road was only one house of importance, and that was the Gate House.

It had been a kind of dower house for the dowager Ladies Danecourt, or the single ladies of the family, for many a generation, and its last tenant had been a widowed daughter of the house, who, coming home from abroad grieved and heartbroken at the death of her young husband, had preferred living alone to darkening the lives of her happy brothers and sisters, by the shadows of her grief.

She had lived there for five solitary years, during which her hair had turned from gold to silver, and her former bright beauty had faded, and then they laid her at rest in the quiet old churchyard.

She had been Hugh Danecourt's favorite sister, and her death had been the deepest grief his manhood had known. He was thinking of her now as he walked beside the agent, with the long swift stride of a practiced pedestrian, and his bright blue eyes were dark and troubled; yet he felt in his heart that it was not merely an objection to seeing any other women in her place at the Gate House which made him hesitate to let it. It was a dim and vague yet strong presentiment that evil would come of it—a presentiment he pooh-poohed and laughed at, yet could not shake off—a presentiment he would have scorned to impart to anyone, and yet which he could not defy without a certain amount of self-mastery.

The silence remained unbroken until they reached the house, and entering by the wide-open hall-door, passed through the vestibule into the great entrance hall, with its carved roof and gallery and stately stained windows, through which the sunshine poured, making great patches of violet and crimson and gold on the polished floor.

"I have been thinking, Sir Hugh," the agent said then deliberately, as the young man removed his Scotch cap, and threw it carelessly on the oaken table, "that two hundred a-year would not make an undesirable addition to Miss Jessie's marriage portion. I have heard you regret that you could not see your way to increasing it, she having chosen a not very wealthy suitor. Of course I only venture to suggest such a proposition," he added, bowing as he turned away, crossed the hall and disappeared down a corridor at the further end of it.

Sir Hugh stood still for a moment looking after him in deep thought, then he roused himself with an effort, turned on his heel and entered the dining-room, feeling that Ware's last argument had been a potent one, and that the Gate House should receive a tenant at last.

But if Jeffery Ware, who a few hours later so gladly wrote to accept the tenants Mr. Bevan offered, could have foreseen the result of that letter of acceptance, he, faithful friend and servant of Hugh Danecourt's as he was, would have cut off his right hand rather than have been in any way instrumental in bringing upon him the greatest trouble of his life.

CHAPTER III.

THE fair May sunshine streamed brightly down on the sombre gray stone and heavy mullioned windows of Danecourt; the beeches in the woods had donned their fairest spring attire; the horse-chestnuts in the avenue were a mass of creamy blossoms; the air—fresh and sweet as it is sometimes, but, alas, only too seldom in May—was fragrant with the fragrance of the hawthorn, whose rose and white blossoms made great spots of color and sweetness among the trees.

All the land was full of beauty and freshness and the gladness of growing, reviving life, and Hugh Danecourt, sauntering slowly down the drive, glanced around him appreciatively, thinking that he had never seen his old home look so beautiful as it did now.

A very handsome specimen of the genus homo was Hugh Danecourt, as the May sunshine fell upon him; as he strolled down the drive with its beautiful trees on either side, he looked a fitting master for this beautiful, stately home, and a man whom any woman might be proud to call lover or husband.

No woman had a right so to call him yet, no man in all the land could be more totally fancy free than this fair-haired young giant on that fair spring day, as he strolled leisurely down to meet his fate, and paced his beautiful grounds heart-whole and carefree for the last time.

The Squire of Danecourt was a tall, strongly yet gracefully built man of seven or eight-and-twenty, whose every movement was full of ease, and grace, and vigor, for all the graceful languor he knew so well how to assume, or rather which was so natural to him sometimes.

He had frank, smiling blue eyes, closely-cut, closely-curling fair hair, a long, silky moustache, which a cavalry officer might have envied, and a short, carefully-trimmed, fair beard, which the sunshine was turning into threads of gold.

He looked very handsome, very happy and debonnaire in his gray tweed suit, with a narcissus in his buttonhole; and so thought a gentleman who was coming towards him up the avenue under the shadows of the flowering chestnut trees.

He was a man of Sir Hugh's age, or a little older, almost as tall as Sir Hugh himself, but more slightly built, with the pale complexion and thoughtful, rather tired eyes of a student, yet with an energy and freedom of movement of a man who did not devote all his time to study, and allowed himself a fair proportion of exercise and muscular pursuits.

"Whither away, Hugh?" he asked, stretching out a cordial hand, which Sir Hugh's met readily. "What is the meaning of this gala attire? You look more fit for the park than for Daleshire."

"Do I?" said Sir Hugh laughing. "My dear Allen, I'm a martyr to circumstances. Were you going to see me?"

"No," said Allen Glyde, shaking his head; "I was going to see Mrs. Cairns. I promised Miss Danecourt to visit her and report progress."

"Turn back with me," Sir Hugh said, putting his hand for a moment on the clergyman's shoulder and turning him around; "I'm not going far, so I won't detain you."

"You want to explain the circumstances to which you are a martyr, I suppose?" replied the vicar, smiling. "Well, go on. What are they?"

"Briefly these," said Sir Hugh, smiling. "First of all, Ware insists on letting the Gate House; then Anne and Jessie go off to town to decide upon a house for Jessie, and that limb of the law whom she has elected to marry, to start housekeeping in, and leave me alone to face my new tenants. Then, to crown all, these tenants are women, one in trouble, the other ill, and Anne writes me a page and a half of reasons, every one of them good and forcibly expressed, why I should call on them without delay."

"Well," laughed Mr. Glyde. "*Apres.*"

"*Apres!*" Sir Hugh echoed ruefully. "Is there any need of an *apres* I should like to know? Is that not enough? Come with me, Allan," he went on persuasively. "Help me to face the tenants of the Gate House, and I'll be forever grateful."

"Even for such a bribe I can't do it, my dear fellow," said the vicar, shaking his head.

"Why not? I never knew you so disobliging before, Allan; and you must call, you know."

"I have called."

"When?"

"Yesterday."

They had been walking towards the great iron gates, but now Sir Hugh stood still under the chestnut trees, the vicar paused also. Through the thickly-leaved branches of the trees the bright May sunbeams crept, resting upon the two men as they stood there, Sir Hugh in his gray tweed suit, with the narcissus in his buttonhole, the vicar, tall and grave, yet smiling, in his sombre, clerical attire.

"You called yesterday," the squire said ruefully; "just my luck; why did you not tell me, so that I might have gone under your wing?"

"There is nothing very formidable about your tenant," the vicar answered, smiling. "I only saw Mrs. Geith; her sister, Miss Lestrange, did not appear. Mrs. Geith is a very handsome woman, and by no means disconsolate or depressed. She seems to be a well-bred, cultivated, travelled woman, who, if she has seen sorrow, as one may suppose she has, since she has lost her husband, bears her sorrow bravely and well. Altogether, she is a very charming person."

Sir Hugh breathed a sigh of relief.

"You assure me," he said, smiling; "I breathe again."

"If her sister resembles her, they will make very pleasant additions to our rather limited circle," the vicar remarked, as they went on together. "I think Miss Danecourt will like her very much."

Sir Hugh hid a little significant smile under his long, golden moustache. What Miss Danecourt approved, the vicar usually approved, he thought, and vice versa.

They had reached the great iron gates now; the lodge-keeper's wife came out to smile and curtsey to her master, who nodded to her with the kindliness which had won for Hugh Danecourt, not only the respect but the love of those who served him.

The two young men stopped in the road; before them, the little gate leading into the grounds of the Gate House stood open, the sunshine fell gently and tenderly on the warm, red brick, which gleamed through the clustering ivy which almost covered the back of the house—which, as we have already seen, faced the road—and out of which the casement windows of the servants' quarters, with their quaint, diamond-shaped panes, peeped cunningly.

"You feel reassured?" queried the vicar, glancing quizzingly at the handsome, debonnaire face, upon which no shadow of the coming trouble fell. "You can dispense with your pastor's protection, Hugh?"

"I think so! I feel less diffident certainly," said the squire laughing. "And yet, when I think of Sam Weller's father, I tremble in my shoes!"

"Why?"

"Have you forgotten? 'Widows,' says that wise man, speaking from his own bitter experience, 'widows is pisen! Beware of widows!' When I recall that warning, Allan, I think I had better turn back."

They should hands cordially; the clergyman turned back and re-entered the park, pausing for a moment to exchange a few words with the lodge-keeper's wife. Sir Hugh strolled across the dusty high road.

and entering by the open gateway, walked slowly over the soft, green sward round to the house.

The door was open, and the quaint, old-fashioned hall was plainly visible, as well as the shallow staircase, which led to the upper story, the staircase, whose carved oaken balustrade would have charmed a lover of antiquities.

Familiar as the sight of this hall had been to him, Hugh Danecourt felt a sudden mist come between his eyes and it in that moment; it recalled to him so vividly, and with such distinctness, the sister whom he had loved and lost.

As he stood waiting a moment, until his ring was answered, he saw that some great change had taken place in the Hall, which under the sad regime of the sorrowful young mistress who had last reigned there, had looked gloomy and dingy.

It was gloomy still, for the upper panes of its windows were of stained glass, and the deep porch before the door kept out the sunshine, but the gloom was so brightened and relieved by rich hangings, and the rich yet sombre hues of the Turkish rugs on the oaken floor that it was gloom no longer.

Formerly it would have been evident to even a casual observer that the mistress of the house was not a practical house-keeper, looking well to the ways of her household. Poor Millie Dacre's ill-health and sorrow had left her house entirely to her servants, and the result had not been very satisfactory; her own rooms, certainly, being well cared for, but the rest of her house being much neglected.

Now, even an indifferent observer could not fail to be struck by the exquisite orderliness, and spotless, cleanliness which reigned in the quaint old hall, while every available receptacle was full of spring flowers, artistically arranged.

A bright fire of logs was burning under the carved oak mantel-piece, and was reflected back from the shining brass dogs and andirons, and the tiled hearth; a handsome collie dog was lying on the rug, he lifted his head lazily, glanced at Sir Hugh, and apparently satisfied with the appearance of the visitor, resumed his temporarily disturbed slumbers.

Sir Hugh's summons was answered almost immediately by an old man-servant, out of livery, whose face brightened as he saw the Squire, who greeted him with a smiling nod.

"I did not know you were here, Knolls," he said pleasantly. "Is Mrs. Geith at home?"

"Yes, Sir Hugh," the man replied respectfully. "There are several others here whom you might recollect, Sir Hugh," he added as he led the way across the hall. "My mistress brought no servants with her. Mr. Ware engaged them all for her."

"It must seem like old times to you," Sir Hugh said kindly. "I am glad you are here, Knolls. Ladies living alone need honest and trustworthy servants about them."

Even as he spoke it struck him as somewhat strange that a lady in Mrs. Geith's position, and of her wealth should not have servants of long standing about her, but the thought was only momentary, the next moment, as the portiere fell over the drawing room door, shutting him into the room, Knolls disappeared, after placing a chair, to inform his mistress of Sir Hugh's visit, it was forgotten.

For a minute, in the dim light of the room, Sir Hugh, coming in fresh from the strong spring sunshine, could see nothing, but when his eyes grew accustomed to the soft semiobscurity of the shaded room, he saw that it was a beautiful one, and that the changes visible in the hall had reached here also.

Rich, soft-hued Eastern stuffs draped the windows and doorways; a profusion of Indian china of great beauty was placed in quaint carved cabinets; the semi-grand piano was open, and a fan lay upon the white notes; here too, were flowers in profusion, but they were hothouse flowers and rare ferns, not the open-air spring blossoms. A fire was burning low on the tiled hearth, and as he glanced at it Sir Hugh became aware for the first time that he was not alone. A lady was lying back in a low armchair upon the hearth, and her regular breathing and closed eyes showed that she slept.

Moved by an uncontrollable impulse, Hugh Danecourt moved forward noiselessly, and let his wondering, admiring eyes rest upon the face of the woman whom from that moment he loved with the one great love his life could ever know.

For a minute or two he looked at her, hardly knowing whether she was beautiful or not, yet with his heart throbbing quickly and his breath coming unevenly from his lips.

To the last day of his life Sir Hugh remembered the picture on which his eager eyes rested unchidden, many and many a time in the days to come, the days at first so matchlessly sweet, and at last so matchlessly bitter, he saw it again as plainly as he did then.

A fragrant, scented room with an old-world grace and charm about it, a low, red fire under a carved mantel, a little black satin chair, a slender, motionless form, all white save for a bunch of crimson flowers on her breast, which rose and fell with every softly-drawn breath, and which gave the whiteness the one touch of color it required.

She was so white, so pure, so still that she looked more like a beautiful statue than a living woman, yet no statue, however beautiful could make Hugh Danecourt's heart beat, and his pulse throb, as the sight of this woman did, as he stood watching her with his heart in his blue eyes.

When the first startled amazement had somewhat subsided, Sir Hugh drew slightly back, feeling that he had no right to stand there and feast his eyes without permission on this sleeping beauty, and yet his strength of mind was not great enough for flight. Besides, where could he go? Knolls had shown him in here to await the coming of his mistress, and he must stay until she came. And then, from this slightly increased distance, his eager, longing eyes went back to the lovely face lying back against the sombre background of black satin, and rested there.

It was a lovely face, strangely, pathetically beautiful, and one which once seen could not fail to be remembered. It was very pale, and the thinness of the delicate cheek and the shadows under the closed eyes, half concealed though they were by the long dark lashes which fringed the white lids, spoke of recent illness or delicate health, but the pallor and thinness only gave a pathetic cast to her loveliness without detracting from it.

Her hair, which was of a pale golden hue, was cut short and clustered around her head in loose masses, shading the white brow and contrasting strongly with the black delicately arched brows and jetty lashes.

She wore a white gown whose loose, soft folds fell around her, and lay on the soft Eastern carpet; her little hands utterly devoid of rings, as Sir Hugh's eager eyes had already shown him, were loosely linked on her lap, resting on an open volume of poetry; she wore no jewelry, the knot of crimson roses was her only ornament, and the only bit of color about her, save the faint crimson hue of the sweet curved lips.

But it was not so much her beauty as her extreme fragility which touched the fair-haired young giant who contemplated her with such absorbed attention.

He was used to beauty in his sisters, who, like all the Danecourts, possessed an unusual share of good looks, so that if Cecil Lestrange had been merely beautiful the sight of her would not have moved him so much, but she was so frail, so fragile in her loveliness, she looked as if a rough wind would blow her away, as if trouble of any kind would crush out her life; and Sir Hugh felt an insane desire to take her bodily into his strong arms and shelter her there from every harsh breath or passing cloud.

"Whoever loved that loved not at first sight?" asks one of our greatest poets. An hour ago, Hugh Danecourt would have laughed or perhaps sneered at the words, but as he stood there in the softened light of the pretty old room, his heart passed out of his keeping into that of the pale woman in her white gown whom he saw now for the first time, and even whose name he did not know.

And as he looked, the long, black lashes were slowly lifted from the pale cheeks, and two great dark-grey eyes, very dark and very beautiful, looked up with a faint, little, dreamy smile in their lustrous depths into his.

For fully a minute the two pairs of eyes, the blue and the gray ones, gazed into each other's depths in silence, the faint, dreamy smile lingering in the one, the passionate, eager light in the other. Sir Hugh's heart was beating like a sledge hammer against his ribs; he had grown very pale, the words of eager apology which had risen to his lips died away there, he could not speak.

The faint, dreamy smile died out of the beautiful "eyes of dangerous gray," a faint color rose in the pale cheeks as Cecil slowly raised herself from her cushion.

"What is it?" she said in a somewhat startled voice; "how did you come in here?"

"I beg your pardon," the young man stammered; "I most earnestly beg your pardon for disturbing you. Knolls showed me in here, and——"

The puzzled look was fading out of the lustrous dark-gray eyes; the little smile was creeping back to them.

"Ah, you are only a morning caller," she said, smiling; "not part of my dream, as I fancied for a brief moment. No; you did not disturb me. I suppose I awoke because my sleep was over, for I heard nothing. You must pardon so unceremonious a reception," she continued lightly. "I retain some of my invalid privileges, although I have ceased entirely to be an invalid since we came to the Gate House."

"I am glad of that—I am truly glad of that," Sir Hugh said earnestly. "I am rejoiced to hear that the change has been beneficial."

"You speak as if you were a doctor who had ordered the change," she replied laughingly. "But thank you for being glad; it is not pleasant to be out of health. Will you not sit down?" she added with pretty courtesy; "my sister will be here directly, I should think."

Sir Hugh seated himself, thinking that the longer Mrs. Geith absented herself the better, since a tete-a-tete with this beautiful creature was of all things the most to be desired.

"You like the Gate House?" he said breaking a little silence which had fallen between them—a silence during which Cecil looked into the fire, and Sir Hugh looked at her beautiful, pale profile.

"Like it? Oh, so much!" she answered enthusiastically. "It is a charming old house, and the country is so beautiful. We are so much obliged to Sir Hugh Danecourt for accepting us as tenants."

"It is Hugh Danecourt who is the obliged party," he said smiling. "And he is quite ready to acknowledge his obligation."

She turned to him, her sweet eyes wide with surprise.

"Are you Sir Hugh Danecourt?" she said, in a tone of unmitigated astonishment.

Sir Hugh bowed.

"Are you surprised?" he asked lightly.

"Very much," she answered frankly. "We, Laura and I, had pictured our landlord as a typical English squire."

"And I am not?" he asked smiling.

She glanced at him half shyly, then smiled also.

"I don't know," she said lightly. "My experience of English squires is limited almost to yourself, Sir Hugh. In novels, you know, the country squire is always very portly, and rubicund, and bluff, and fond of port wine, and fifty years old at least."

"Never younger?" queried Sir Hugh, smiling.

"Oh, never! He is born old, I suppose."

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

CANDLES.—Candles denote both a low and a high state of society. The early Greeks and Romans burned candles made of wax and tallow. These were of a very primitive kind, consisting of oakum wicks and of the pith of bulrushes, dipped into liquid wax or tallow. But these gave way to the handier lamp, whether of terra cotta or of bronze. In a country abounding in olive and other vegetable oils, this was the easier way. In this country the supply was, as indicated, from an animal source. Then a time came, when lamps, except for the wealthy, went out of use, and candles were mostly used. Now, far more lamps are used than at the end of the last century. Before the introduction of petroleum and gas, candles in the country and in the city were used, either by the very poor or the very rich. The Queen of England has never given a drawing-room reception where either lamplight or gaslight was used; only wax-lights must shine. No British nobleman invites his guests to a ball where the illumination is by anything else than by expensive wax-candles; by the latter are meant either those made from wax, as we commonly understand it, or from the finest spermaceti. On the altars in churches none but lights made from vegetable wax and vegetable oil are ever used. It is said the reason why wax candles are thus used in the drawing-rooms of royalty and the nobility, is that ladies appear to better advantage with such a light, and also that it is better for their complexion than gas.

ETERNAL self-communion is our destiny. Shall it be communion with selves that we must abhor and despise, or with selves into which we can look with gratitude and gladness?

Bric-a-Brac.

DINING-TABLES.—Chinese dining-tables are all square, it being contrary to the Buddhist practice to eat off any other shaped table. The origin of this curious custom is the legend that the affairs of the world were originally under the joint responsibility of eight gods of equal power. These spirits used invariably to sit around a four-sided table, two abreast; and it becomes all good Celestials to imitate their gods.

CATS.—There is not a single cat within the limits of the town of Leadville, Colorado. Cats have been imported there by the hundred, and in all varieties of color and size; but not one has ever survived the second week of residence. However, as there are no rats and mice in Leadville, there is no real need of cats, and their absence makes little difference. The thin atmosphere at that latitude (ten thousand two hundred feet) is as fatal to the vermin as to their foe.

THE CAPTAIN.—Our barbaric notion that the captain must be absolute autocrat of his vessel is by no means allowed in China, where the law provides that in the event of an approaching storm the passengers may require the captain to strike sail and wait till the danger is past. Should he refuse to comply with the requirements of the land-lubber, he is liable to receive forty blows of a bamboo. But terrible as are Chinese floggings, they are mere trifles compared with the penalty of three months subject to the tortures of a Chinese prison as a sequence to shipwreck.

THE ASH.—In Scandinavian mythology the ash holds a high place. Under it the gods held council, and the summit of their holy ash reached the heavens, while its roots penetrated the infernal regions. On its topmost branch perched an eagle, which observed everything that passed below; and from its roots sprang two fountains, in one of which was concealed Wisdom, in the other Prophecy. The first man, so says the legend, was made out of this tree; he drank out of one of the fountains and received wisdom; but, as he neglected to drink out of the other, he had no knowledge of the future.

TREES.—The withering and death of the bay tree were reckoned a prognostic of evil, both in ancient and modern times—a notion to which Shakspeare refers in Richard III.: "'Tis thought the king is dead; we will not stay; the bay trees in our country are all withered." The ancient Britons had a great reverence for running streams, trees, and serpents. The tree they most honored was the oak, and, still more than the oak, the mistletoe which grew on it. Whenever a plant of it was found on an oak tree, a solemn procession was formed, two white bulls were sacrificed, and the sacred plant cut with a knife of gold.

THE PERSIAN WAY.—The Shah of Persia avails himself of the custom of selling office to the highest bidder, and thus adds very materially to his revenues. This, however, is done with discrimination, a reasonable consideration for the welfare of the empire being included in the selection made. The position of premier, for example, is not given to any one who may offer the highest sum for the post, but, of two or three who are best qualified for it, that one is selected who is prepared to make the largest present to the Shah. Contrary to what one might think, this custom is not opposed to permanency in office. If a high official continues to give satisfaction, he is often permitted to remain for many years, provided he is able to make a valuable annual present to his Majesty.

"HAPPY THE BRIDE, ETC."—There is a very old saying, peculiar to no part of the world, and generally accepted as correct, that "happy is the bride the sun shines on." Nor is it only an important matter to choose the wedding day carefully, the Feast of St. Joseph was especially to be avoided. It is supposed that as the day fell in mid-Lent, it was the reason why al the councils and synods of the Church forbade marriage during the season of fasting; indeed, all penitential days and vigils throughout the year were considered unsuitable for these joyous ceremonies. The Church blamed those husbands who married early in the morning, in dirty or negligent attire, reserving their better dresses for balls and feasts, and the clergy were forbidden to celebrate the rites after sunset, because the crowd often carried the party by main force to the ale-house, or beat them and hindered their departure from the church until they had obtained a ransom.

A WITHERED BOUQUET.

BY SUSANNA J.

Droop, gentle flow'rs, and close each silken fold;
Your bright hues fade, your fragrance charms no more;
The brief sweet story of your lives is told,
And now your day is o'er.

Soft were the silver showers that nourished you,
And low the winds that sought for your perfume;
Gracious and tender was the warmth that drew
Your ling'ring buds to bloom.

And with it all there was a loving care—
A watchful eye that noted every day
The growing wants of plant and leafage fair,
Of branch and wand'ring spray.

But, while the sun caressed each favored flower
And your full incense charmed the Summer air,
Your doom was uttered by a voice of power,
Because ye bloomed so fair.

And in the end, your little triumph past,
My gentle flow'rs, we treasure you no more;
Like some fair dream, too beautiful to last,
Your fragile charm is o'er.

There have been fondly-cherished hopes, we know,
Nurtured and kept within these hearts of ours,
Until some fatal hour has laid them low,
To wither like these flowers.

A FLOWER OF FATE

BY THE AUTHOR OF "THE WILD WARRINGTONS," "LIKE LOST SHEEP," ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IT was Mr. Binkworthy, it could be no one else.

Ah, well, humbly, if need were upon my knees I would ask him, beseech him to forgive me, to be Christian enough, if he had a man's heart within his breast, to run to the surgery and bring back Doctor North!

He could not refuse—oh, surely not!—when he should see what genuine grief was mine, when he should learn that my child, my darling, my all, was indeed that night passing from earth to heaven.

With an imprecation the man outside once more seized the knocker.

I wrenched open the door and cried hoarsely—

"Stop!"

At first I did not recognize him. His back being towards the street-lamp, his face was in shadow.

But in the next instant, powerless to check the scream which rushed to my white lips, I had staggered, gasping and half senseless, backward to the passage wall.

"Periwinkle," said a too-familiar voice—the thick jaunty voice of one who is not wholly sober—"how are you? Glad to remark that you seem overjoyed to see me! That's well—in fact as it should be, my dear, for I am come to take care of you again. D'ye hear—'m, eh? So I think I'll walk in."

The man was my husband—Daryl Darkwood.

* * * * * *

With one hand pressed over my eyes, with the other, like a blind woman, I groped my way back to the sitting-room, and there sank helplessly upon the sofa by Isla. I heard Daryl shut the street door; and then he followed me in.

I groaned. He tossed his hat noisily on to the top of the piano, and flung himself into an easy-chair by the window.

With an effort I recovered my stricken wits, my failing strength; and, with passion but ill controlled, I turned towards my husband.

"Will you have the goodness, the humanity to be quiet, Daryl?" I said, in a trembling undertone. "Isla is ill, dying, they tell me. Now that you are here—though Heaven knows why you have come, how you found me, will you go— Oh, Daryl," I broke off, no anger quivering in my voice now—it was tremulous with pleading, humility, and deep despair—"go and bring Doctor North here, will you? I am frightened, the child is very ill, not conscious, I am in the house alone. He, the doctor, lives close by; you will see the red lamp——"

"Ah," he threw in, with a slight hiccoughing sound, but as coolly as if we had parted only the day before, "I was told yesterday that the youngster was ailing a bit, had been seedy for some time past! But, you know, Flower, my dear, you always took fright without cause whenever the child was concerned—exaggerated trifles, made mountains out of molehills—you know you did. If she had got just the suspicion of a feverish cold, you were immediately convinced that she was down with the scarlet-fever. Dying? Not she! That's like you, Periwinkle. Where is she? Oh, I see you've got her with you, covered up there! I'll come over and have a look at her in a minute. But, as I was saying, when old Binkworthy told me yesterday——"

"Ha!"

"What's the matter?" inquired Daryl, smiling indolently.

"It was that man then who gave you my address," said I, in a husky whisper, "who told you where you would find me?"

"Right; he did," replied my husband, with another hateful smile.

"The villain!" I hissed, my hands locked about my knees, my wild dry eyes fixed upon the fire before me. "It was his malice, his way of making me suffer. I might have guessed what to expect of him, might have known that he would not spare me after my——"

"Ha, ha, ha!" Daryl laughed, in the old boisterous style. "'The villain,' eh? That's how you thank a fellow, is it, for kindly handing you over to the lawful protection of your husband?"

"You are my husband no longer," I murmured doggedly.

"So! The law, as it now stands, I fancy, would take a different view of the case," replied Daryl affably.

"Daryl, I would rather die than live with you again," I said in hollow accents, with my haggard gaze still fixed upon my smouldering fire of wood. "You deceived me abominably, unpardonably, to say nothing further. You turned me adrift, were only too glad when a sham opportunity occurred——"

"If I remember rightly, you turned yourself adrift; didn't you? I am sure I never expressed any wish that you should go. You went, my dear Flower, purely of your own accord."

"It was impossible to remain an hour longer with you after what I learned, after your despicable and unmanly conduct," I said haughtily. "No true woman would have endured it. Any woman on earth worthy the name would have left you as I did."

"You choose your words at random, Periwinkle," observed Daryl plaintively. "Despicable! Unmanly!"

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Come, now, isn't that a trifle harsh of you? 'Pon my soul, I think it is, when I am so willing, why, you can see that I am, to forgive and to forget, to let go all unpleasant by-gones, don't you know, and——"

I held up my hand, I have been more than once told that it is a trick of mine, with a gesture of passionate scorn and disgust.

"I do not want your forgiveness, Daryl. I never in any wise erred, to require, to justify forgiveness from you; and as for letting by-gones be by-gones—faugh!" I exclaimed wearily. "Your motive for seeking me here in as clear as noonday. You have of course learned at the theatre that I have for some time past been in the receipt of a considerable weekly salary, paid to me by Mr. Binkworthy. It is perfectly true, I own it; and therefore it has occurred to you that I am, in the circumstances, a wife worth claiming. A wife that can earn her thirty or forty pounds a week is a person worth looking after, a wife worth forgiving when she has done nothing to forgive! You are wondrously magnanimous, Daryl. You come here for my money, not for me."

I dropped my head desolately to the pillow beside Isla's.

She was asleep, or seemed to be. But I was determined that Doctor North should see her once more that night.

"Oh, my darling," I breathed, "if we might only die together!"

"You put it coarsely," I heard Daryl saying, still in that absurdly plaintive voice of his which he could assume whenever he chose. "I grant you, Flower, that I want money, I want money badly; in fact, at the present moment, I haven't a sixpence in the whole world to call my own, haven't indeed. Gave cabby my last half-crown. Rosenberg returned to his native Schloss and his sausages a couple of days or so ago. By-the-way, did I tell you? it was he who, one night by himself, looking in for a lark at the Levity, recognized in the popular Madame Fleurette my own lost talented wife, Mrs. Daryl Darkwood; and—and—— Well, Rosenberg's gone, you see, and altogether luck with me of late has been deucedly bad. Can't understand it—it's beastly hard. I am not accustomed to this wretched ill-luck. But when things are at their worst they mend, 'tis said; and so, Periwinkle, my dear, as I remarked just now, you must be sensible, and let all past mistakes and small unpleasantnesses be exactly as though they never had happened with us. In short, we'll make it up—kiss and be friends, eh? We'll spend a quiet Christmas together—here, if you like, melancholy as it all seems, or wherever you please, Flower, and hope for better luck with the New Year."

As I deigned no answer, nor lifted my head from the child's pillows, Daryl rose rather unsteadily from his seat, though he was more sober now than he had been when he arrived, and came over to the couch-side.

"Hullo, Tupp'ny," he cried cheerily, "how are you? Don't you know me, little 'un—'m, eh?"

I was upon my feet then in an instant. How I managed it—so weak and spent as I was—in truth I do not know. But, despite his height and strength, I struck my hands against Daryl's chest and thrust him backward to the arm-chair he had vacated.

"How dare you, at such a time?" I said hoarsely. "Have you no grain of tenderness, no natural feeling, have you no heart, no spark of manhood left in you? Your brutal roughness will kill her!" I said, trembling with indignation at his callous mien in this hour of, to me, supreme sadness.

"I wasn't going to eat her, don't be frightened!" said my husband sullenly.

As I had feared he would, he had disturbed the child.

She stirred uneasily, opened her eyes, uttered the little pathetic moan I knew so well, and said just audibly—

"Is Mr. Eversleigh come yet, mamma?"

"No, my dearest," I said very simply, very quietly, for I somehow felt, although I could not see them, my back being turned to him, that Daryl's brilliant dark eyes, with a savage sneering light in them, were at that moment fixed upon me. "It is papa; Mr. Eversleigh, you know, Isla, never comes here."

To any further, to any more direct explanation I would not condescend, no matter what vile suspicion, awakened by the child's innocent delirium, might be passing through the bad heart of him who called himself my husband.

"Shall we—shall we never see Mr. Eversleigh any more, mamma?" whispered Isla.

"Some day perhaps, dear," I answered brokenly. "I cannot tell."

Daryl burst out laughing, and struck the floor with his heel.

"I suppose," said he, "your old"—here an insulting pause—"your old friend frequently looks in to—well, to inquire after his favorite, the youngster—eh?" drawled my husband.

Straight into his handsome insolent eyes I looked.

"You may think just whatever you please, Daryl," I said, as calmly as I could. "The child's mind is wandering; you know it. However, you have wilfully misjudged me often in the past; you are at liberty to misjudge me again. It does not matter; I do not mind now."

"All women are alike," observed he, with something of his old airy manner, quite aware that it would in no wise serve his purpose to quarrel with me to-night.

"They are. They discover, sooner or later, poor souls—poor fools!—that there are few good men in the world," I said, as I held another spoonful of wine to Isla's lips.

Daryl threw back his head and laughed pleasantly. Isla, with hers upon my breast, was murmuring—

"I am so tired, mamma—so tired!"

"Daryl," I said more patiently, "may I now beg you to go and call Doctor North? The surgery is quite near—a red lamp is over the surgery door. It will not take you five minutes. Daryl, do go, please—please go!" And I explained to him precisely where Doctor North lived.

"Oh, I'll go!" he said leisurely.

He got up as he spoke and put on his hat. I then for the first time noticed that the hat in style was new and fashionable, as were his clothes. Certainly, for a man with no money, my husband was remarkably well dressed.

But many a West-end tradesman—so I learned some while afterwards, was at that time anxious to discover the whereabouts of Daryl Darkwood.

"I think you might offer a fellow a drink, Flower," he observed reproachfully "before he goes."

"I have nothing to offer you. At least, there is some port-wine on the sideboard—nothing else."

"Have you no brandy in the place?" he inquired.

"None that I can give you. The small quantity that I am never without I regard as a medicine—an invaluable restorative not to be wasted."

"Well, you know what I've told you," he said lightly. "You can lend me a sovereign, of course?"

Then I did a foolish thing; but I did it without reflection. I was so feverishly eager to see him depart on his errand that at the moment of committing it the folly of my thoughtless act entirely failed to strike me. When it was too late, I realised that I had acted unwisely.

I drew out my purse and laid it upon the table.

"Take that, if you like," I said. "Only have pity on me and make haste."

He unfastened the purse and counted its contents.

"A couple of sovereigns, some silver, and a latch-key," said he. "Is that all you have?"—dropping the purse into his pocket.

"Every farthing that I have in the house. With the key you can let yourself in when you return."

"But you have more elsewhere?" said my husband boldly.

"Yes."

"Good night, Tupp'ny," he called out from the passage. But the child did not hear him, or at all events she took no notice of her father's light farewell. "Oh, by-the-bye," said Daryl abruptly, reappearing at the sitting-room door, "I presume you can give me a shake-down somewhere or other, Flower?"

"A bed here, do you mean?"

"Yes; I mean a bed here."

"Impossible," I answered dully.

"Oh, hang it! Why not?"

"Every room in the house is occupied," I replied, "upstairs and down."

"Is there a decent tavern, I wonder, to be found in this beastly locality?" grumbled Daryl.

"I do not know. I daresay. But why cannot you go back to Mrs. Ramage's?" said I apathetically.

"Because I cannot—and that's enough. What's more, how the deuce do you know that I came from Mrs. Ramage's?" he answered brusquely. And then he went.

The clock in St. Saviour's steeple was chiming a quarter to ten as Daryl Darkwood shut the street door behind him and strode off to summon Doctor North.

Would he, Daryl, be long in finding the surgery? I prayed not.

I had some time before heard Mrs. Sadler's sons come in and go to bed.

But the mother herself—in her doleful fashion an inveterate gossip whensoever opportunity came in her way—was still out; and the house had grown deadly quiet again.

The drawing-room floor was rented by two commercial travelers, intimate friends, who were occasionally absent from Bentham Street for several days together.

Like old Mr. Jones and myself, they had their own latch-keys; and so, as their hour of arrival was invariably very late, and their hour of departure always very early, I knew scarcely anything of these two men — had never once seen either of them.

Mrs. Sadler however had twice or thrice gartuitously informed me that her drawing-room lodgers were perfect gentlemen; but there my knowledge of them ended.

Neither had old Mr. Jones yet come in, which for him was really extraordinary. Unlike Mrs. Sadler, the old man was no gossip.

I did not believe that he could boast of a single chatting acquaintance in the neighborhood of the house where he lodged.

He visited none of the numerous public-houses near; was in bed as a rule by half-past nine; and—— Yes—hark! There was St. Saviour's chiming again and about to strike ten o'clock.

Daryl had already been gone a quarter of an hour.

Where could he be? Doctor North's house was so close, so easy to find, being well within a stone's-throw of the corner of Bentham Street, that it was absurd to imagine for an instant that one could lose one's way in going thither.

Besides, I had made Daryl clearly understand which turning to take and what was the number of the Doctor's house; and, even supposing his memory should fail him, any one in the street would direct him afresh.

The winged minutes flew by, the wheezy old clock down-stairs seemed to labor and tick more loudly than ever, the white wood ashes dropped to the hearth like the sad leaves falling earthward in autumn. There once more went the chimes of St. Saviour—a quarter-past ten! No Mrs. Sadler, no old Mr. Jones, no Daryl, no Doctor North. Where could they all be?

The silence and the loneliness of the house were dreadful. I began to feel horribly nervous—I cannot tell why—stupidly frightened. The shadows in the corners of the room took fearful shapes, and seemed, with weird antics, to be grimacing at me through the gloom. I stirred the fire and put on more wood; the blaze of it might chase away those horrid shapes upon the wall.

The excitement caused by Daryl's unlooked-for and startling appearance in Bentham Street had given me a temporary but an unnatural strength and courage.

Now the reaction was quickly following, and I once more began dimly to realise that fasting and anxiety, sleeplessness and sorrow, had cruelly weakened me, and that I was feeling downright ill.

My head indeed, in one minute, felt heavy as lead, in the next, feather-light, with a blinding giddiness that was intolerable. Was I going mad? Oh, no,—not that—not that! I would eat something—that would be wise.

I had fasted too long—it was foolish. Doctor North would arrive directly; he must not find me like this, in a state of utter nervousnes and collapse.

With uncertain steps I went over to the sideboard.

Upon it, forgotten by Mrs. Sadler, stood a loaf of bread on a pink-and-white china plate, with a large black-handled table-knife lying by the side of it.

I drank a glass of port, and managed to eat with it a crust of bread.

As I set down the empty wine-glass a sound in the bed-room reached my ear; it was as if some one was laughing—a low mocking laugh — behind the folding-doors.

The roots of my hair grew damp; my forehead too.

I could hear the thumping of my own heart as I stood there breathless, listening intently.

Horribly frightened as I was, I seized a bed-room candlestick, lighted the candle, and moved swiftly and noiselessly into the other room. But no creature was there.

I looked under the bed. I peered into every corner. Nobody—nothing!

It was diseased imagination, acute nervousness, I wearily told myself as I shut and now locked the folding-doors; unless it be, as some folk maintain, that both good and evil spirits do inhabit the air around us.

Assuredly that, if either, was an invisible spirit of evil which had laughed in the other room! Nothing holy could have uttered a sound at once so mocking and so unearthly!

Morbid imagination, unhealthy fancy? Yes—have I not said so? Nevertheless I shivered violently.

Oh, my head, how strange it felt! Now so heavy, now so light; now so burning hot, now so curiously——

"Mamma," said Isla's feeble little voice from the sofa, "I am so cold—so very cold, mamma. Will you take me on your lap? I—I shall be warmer then."

Ere the weak little voice had ceased its plaint I was with her: my arms held her passionately to my bosom; my face rested upon hers.

Yes——sweet little soul!—as she said she was very cold. Her snowdrop cheek was chill as marble itself; but—but I had no fear of it—the warmth of my own body would enter hers, and she herself would grow warm again by-and-by.

Where was Daryl? Why did he not hurry homeward, and bring with him Doctor North? Let me think—let me remember if I could! Had he been gone five minutes or an hour—one hour or three? Stay! Perhaps it had all been a trick of my sick fancy, like the horrid demon laugh behind the folding-doors, and Daryl had never in reality been within miles of Bentham Street?

His seeming presence there in my sitting-room was after all nothing in the world but a vivid and painful dream—could that be it? Perhaps.

And yet—and yet surely I had seen him, spoken to him, touched him? Surely it was Daryl Darkwood in the flesh—the selfish and living Daryl Darkwood—who had appeared before me that night?

The clock aloft in St. Saviour's spire was striking now.

What melancholy chimes they were at night! Eleven! Was it eleven, or really midnight? How quiet it all was! How chilly the room was growing! How strangely soothing was the silence of the night, how full of unfathomable mystery! I have read somewhere, I cannot remember where, that God, in the darkness, to one on earth, seems always very far away. It has never, though, seemed to me like this.

Ever in the dark, more than in the light, the Creator, I have somehow felt, has been then most friendly and near.

Did I actually sleep, lose all consciousness, all sense of pain, albeit for a few brief blessed moments only? If I did, oh, it is no wonder!

So worn with watching, so weary, so wretched, with every bright hope gone, it is no wonder that oblivion stole mercifully over me and eased me, just for a little space, of the burthen it was my lot to bear!

And yet an oblivion—ah me!—too transient.

He who knows all knows best. My time for going hence was not yet come. Isla must go on the dark journey alone. His will, not mine, be done; but how hard to say "Amen!"

As tranquilly as I had lost all sense of suffering did I as gently awaken to a consciousness of the bitter truth. Oh, cruel life! Oh, kind Death!

Safe elapsed within my arms was the child—but my darling lay dead upon my breast.

* * * * * *

I heard him, with bungling hand, putting the latch-key to the lock.

I heard the door go jarring against the wall, and himself come stumbling over the mats in the entrance-place.

With wild dry eyes full of pain and loathing I sat immovable, staring at the sitting-room door.

Like a woman petrified I sat there upon the sofa, keeping guard over my dead child.

I had covered her with a shawl lightly, as if she had still been sleeping, and had drawn it over the small quiet face, so white, so beautiful in restful death; and now I was waiting—there was nothing else to do—waiting—waiting—yet for what?

The door opened. Daryl came in. I did not speak—I did not stir. But my eyes were upon him and followed his every movement.

He could not stand without support, and rolled at once into the arm-chair by the window.

He must have had a bad fall or two upon the pavement or in the roadway, for I noticed that his hat was crushed and his fine clothes were muddy.

In the old familiar way he sprawled back in the chair, with his hands plunged down into his pockets, and his long legs stretched widely apart over the carpet.

It struck me that he was paler than he was wont to be on an occasion such as the present.

He was tugging savagely at an end of his heavy moustache.

"I say, I couldn't find that doctor of yours," he muttered.

I knew however that he lied—knew well enough now that he had never even tried to find Doctor North's house. But I did not say so.

Thrice I essayed to speak, and thrice my tongue refused to obey me.

"I say, do y' hear?" hiccoughed Daryl. "I've been looking for a bed—looking everywhere—and for—and for that doctor fella' too. Couldn't find the man anywhere—couldn't, 'pon my soul!"

I rose and went over to him. With a sudden return of that temporary and unnatural strength which had before helped me, I gripped him by the wrist and dragged him to his feet. He swore at me.

"Come and see!" I said.

How weird and hollow, I thought, was the sound of my own voice!

I led him to the sofa, and uncovered the child's face.

In silence I pointed to it, still clutching his unwilling arm; thus I held him prisoner.

"Why, she's only asleep. You're too theatrical, Periwinkle, my dear," he said, with a callousness, a tipsy jauntiness that set my brain on fire. "I a'pose now you've got a taste that way—it's only natural."

"That's not asleep, Daryl. That is death."

He laughed thickly but uneasily.

"Oh, come," he was beginning; "that's like you, Flower——"

"You have killed her!" I went on in the same even hollow tone. "You are a murderer. You could have brought Doctor North hither in a few minutes, had you pleased, and he might have saved her; there was a chance, we cannot tell. But you did not; you disregarded the errand which meant life or death, and went elsewhere on a low debauch. Behold your handiwork, Daryl Darkwood, you have murdered her, my child, my darling, my all! Just as in the old days, at that lone old house upon the moor, where you first found me, innocent, happy, and free, you robbed me of, killed—ay, for a long, long while I have guessed it, though I have never told you so—you killed my little dumb faithful mongrel friend, so have you now——"

With a fearful oath he thrust me from him.

"Get out!" he shouted, and staggered back to the convenient arm-chair.

There he lay, with his arms dangling over the leather sides of it, scowling at me from beneath his dark brows, and breathing curses "not loud, but deep."

I bent over my child and kissed her marble cheek, then reverently again covered the little white face that was the face of an angel now.

Oh, Death, kind Death, you are good and merciful—majestic, beautiful, unutterably sweet!

This I never comprehended until now—not until now. How false, how foolish to call you cruel, when in truth you are most pitiful and kind!

And again from my abiding-place at the couch-foot I turned my wild and haggard eyes upon Daryl Darkwood, bending forward as I sat, my elbow upon my knee, and my chin resting firmly upon my clenched hand.

His head had drooped, his moustache swept his breast; he breathed harshly with many a guttural sound, he was fast locked in tipsy slumber.

And this was the man to whom I was chained, who had found me out, who had come to claim me, his own property, and who would make me work for him like any galley-slave whilst he lived ignobly upon the gold I earned.

And he was a murderer to boot. His brutal neglect of right and duty, it was thus that I reasoned with myself on that mad, sad night—had slain my child, the little one that was my darling, my all.

A murderer! And did it not say in the Scripture, "An eye for an eye; a tooth for a tooth; a life for a life?"

And who should gainsay that—Heaven's own command?

To be chained eternally to this bad and selfish man, from whom, it appeared, there was no escape—great Heaven, what a fate! Should I submit to it—submit to it without a struggle?

Should I? Should I tamely bow my neck to his tyrannical yoke, writhe beneath the tyranny of his lazy masterfulness, and yet strike no bold and desperate blow to gain the freedom I coveted?

There he was before me at my mercy! in slumber profound, helpless; as unconscious of the present and its surroundings as the little dead child at my side—utterly at my mercy!

Should I kill him then—kill him, and be free?

Should I do this thing, and at the same time rid both myself and society of a monster of selfishness and cruelty—a man who was not worthy to live and eat, because he would not work for his daily bread so long as others would toil for it and win it for him?

But, I loved him very dearly once, very dearly; and he was the father of my dear child.

He was my husband. Yes—yes say what I might, he was that; and yet—and yet——

My fierce gaze traveled slowly from the sleeping man and wandered instinctively over to the sideboard.

There still were the pink-and-white china plate, the loaf of bread, the large black-handled table-knife——

Ha! Would that knife, I fell to wondering, serve me as a weapon? I remembered that, for a miracle, it was sharp, the sharpest perhaps in the house.

Would it do—would it? Could I, if I tried, kill Daryl with that shining black-handled knife?

I had risen very cautiously. I had crept across the room to the sideboard.

There, with a hurried scared glance over my shoulder at Daryl, I snatched up the knife and hid the horrid thing in the folds of my gown.

As cautiously I moved to his side—stealthily, like an animal approaching its prey; looked at him long and intently.

Could I do it? Dared I?

Should I venture to feel where his heart was beating, the exact spot, and drive the knife in there?

No; his clothes were thick, the blade of it might twist aside, shiver, and break. Then he would awake, discover me in the act . . . red-handed. And what would happen then?

It would be better, wiser, to do it, since it must be done, in some other way that was more sure; but how?

Yes; I could wind my hand amongst his thick soft hair, and, clutching a handful of those dusky locks, draw his head suddenly backward over the chair; so that his throat well bared, it—it would be easy then! That was where the knife should be driven in.

But after all, he was my husband, my dead child's father; and I had loved him very dearly once!

And then something, I knew not what, prompted me, lest a gentle farewell kiss should awaken him, to kneel very softly by his side, and as softly to lay my cheek against his knee.

"Daryl, forgive me—forgive me!" I believe I whispered with a sob.

Kind Heaven, forgive me too! It must be done, I must be free; my darling's death must be avenged.

I stood up, stood resolutely over him, and drew my weapon swiftly from the folds of my skirt.

My breath came hard; my teeth were set; my hand was firm.

Yet what if he should cry out—cry out fearfully? For strong men like Daryl do not die easily, especially when—— But no; that should not be the case.

I would not bungle in my work. I would plunge the knife into him—fatally, surely homeward. He should have no time to shriek.

And so, without a tremor, I seized him by his hair, seized him thus with my left hand, and dragged his dark head well back; and then—and then his dusky throat was bare for the stroke.

In the same instant I flung high my right arm—high, well out from the shoulder—and the cold steel gleamed and glittered in the air.

My burning eyes quailed not, my burning right hand faltered not.

Strike!

In another moment, one brief moment, Daryl would be dead, and I should be free.

But that swift descending arm of mine was snatched into an invisible grip, a grip of iron; and from my nerveless and imprisoned hand the gleaming knife dropped straightway to the floor.

Horrid faces, horrid voices, seemed all at once to fill and to float through the room; and once more I heard the mocking demon laughter behind the folding-doors.

Some one, a man's voice, said, "Thank God, I am not too late!" and it sounded like the welcome voice of an old friend, heard after the silence of many years.

Was it, could it be the voice of Leigh Everuleigh? I fancied so.

With a crashing sound in my ears, I fell, I believe, heavily against the speaker; but my fall was stopped by strong sustaining arms.

Then a great darkness, like the darkness of death, swept over me; and my soul passed thence into the land of shadows.

CHAPTER XXX.

IT was a bright late March day, with a fresh but not a cold wind, on which Aurora, Viscountess Tracy, came in her luxurious carriage to Bentham Street and carried me off to Arley Bridge.

"Thank Heaven, the crisis, the danger is past,
And the ling'ring illness is over at last!"

—any my soul had returned from that dim shadow-land whither, into silence, upon dark mysterious wings, it had been borne, now so many long weeks gone by.

But not into eternal night. After much anxious watching and waiting, wan light had flickered through the gloom, and day for me had at length dawned again.

It is strange there are, I think, few experiences stranger from a trance, as it were, once more to awaken into life, and to know that a portion of it, at any rate so far as oneself is concerned, is without memory, a blank; a curious state of things suggesting perhaps a volume, a life-story, faultily bound, from which several pages are missing.

I remember very clearly opening my eyes one day and finding Aurora sitting by the bedside.

I thought at once that it was her first visit to me since I had been stricken by my dangerous illness. I soon learnt however that I was wrong.

That must have been in February, towards the end of the month; or it may have been about the middle of it.

I do not think that she allowed me to speak at all on that day; I believe indeed that she held up her hand and said "Hush—s—h!"—adding, "If you dare to utter a syllable—if you do not lie there as quiet as a mouse, I'll go away this very minute, and never come see you any more."

Yet often after that I would open my eyes, and there would be Aurora sitting by the pillows.

The delicious things she invariably brought with her—jellies, sweet puddings, choice wines, dainty dishes of all kinds from Arley Bridge, were really enough to stock a small shop for a confectioner.

But by-and-by a day did actually arrive, and this must have been in March, when Doctor North gave me full permission to sit up in bed and talk—to talk of course in moderation.

Of course, too, there must be no excitement, was the Doctor's kindly stipulation.

I am inclined to believe, that is, should I ever have doubted it, that constant attendance in a sick-room will sometimes be the means of creating in the breast of a nurse a true regard and affection for the helpless soul under her care.

At any rate, on that noteworthy day, after Doctor North had left the house, Mrs. Sadler, in her familiar rusty black, crept in, leaned over my pillows, and in a quite motherly fashion kissed me upon the forehead.

And she cried a little, and held my weak white hand to her bosom, and whispered in a choked voice:

"Oh, my pore dear lady, I am that glad, that thankful, you can't think, to hear as you're getting along so nicely! I let the Doctor out just now, and he says you'll gain strength daily if we'll only take care of you. As if we wouldn't! Oh, ma'am, it's been a weary terrible time; but the worst part, thank Heaven, is over!"

"You're very, very good," I murmured.

And then Mrs. Sadler set quietly to work and began bathing my hands and my face in eau-de-Cologne and water.

She brushed the hair from my temples and straightened the creases in the bed-clothes with a deftness and a tenderness of touch that one perhaps would scarcely have expected to find in so poor and doleful a creature as Mrs. Sadler.

So little do we comprehend the hearts and capabilities of those who are daily with us!

"It does indeed seem a shame," observed Mrs. Sadler softly, "to have cut it so cruel short—such beautiful hair too!"

"My hair, do you mean?" said I very languidly. "Have they cut it very short then?"

"Oh, it'll grow again, 'm—never fear," replied Mrs. Sadler, with, for her, a wonderful cheeriness—"thicker and beautifuller than ever, I daresay!"

"It doesn't matter a bit," said I, in the same listless tone—"as well short as long."

Mrs. Sadler sighed then, and let the question drop.

And presently, my toilette completed, as far as it went, the landlady proceeded, with a handful or two of early spring flowers which she had purchased over the area-railings, to make the bed-room quite bright and fragrant. I lay still and watched her, following her movements with dreamy eyes.

"You are making me unusually smart to-day," I said at last. "What is it all for?"

"Oh, her ladyship will be here directly!" replied Mrs. Sadler, bustling about as she spoke, but without any of those irritating bumps and creakings which "bustling about" with most people ordinarily means.

"Her ladyship? And who, pray, is that?"

"Well, 'm, you used to call her Miss de Vere; but I'm told that she is Lady Tracy now—has married the son of a dook or something," replied Mrs. Sadler, as she dusted the cheap gimcracks that decorated the narrow mantelpiece.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

JAPANESE CUSTOMS.

ONE of the chief complaints of travellers in Japan is the dilatoriness of the people. If they make an appointment for twelve o'clock and keep it by six p. m. they think that they have done well.

They have no trains that run at fixed times or banks that close at certain hours, so they have not acquired those habits of promptness that are proverbial with us.

Many people suppose that there is a great similarity between the Japanese and Chinese, but there are no two nations more dissimilar.

The Chinese are fond of studying into the wherefore and the origin of things, while the Japanese care nothing about these matters. They know nothing about the anatomy or physiology of the human body, or the effects of drugs and medicines upon the body, nor do they care.

One great and striking peculiarity of the Japanese is the fact that they speak a polysyllabic language, but write a monosyllabic—that is, they speak their own native language, but write in Chinese characters. Thus they are obliged to learn to read and and write the Chinese language, though they never speak it.

The Mikado is the spiritual head of the Church, and dresses regally. He is also the lawful monarch, the present Mikado being the 161st sovereign.

Until the reign of the present Mikado not one of the Emperors ever put his feet to the ground, and no one, except perhaps his immediate attendants, ever saw his face, for he always sat behind a veil.

The Japanese never swear. The most vigorous expression ever heard in Japan is a word which means "vexing." It is very impolite to eat anything in the streets—even fruit or confectionery. It is also considered impolite to pass any article of food to a guest or ask him if he will have anything more, for the servant must do that.

When a man calls to see another on important business, politeness forbids his mentioning the business till the very last thing before taking one's departure. The same is true in letter-writing—the first part is always filled with compliments.

It is not uncommon to receive a letter sixteen feet long, the last three inches containing all that is worth reading.

Owing to the great politeness of the Japanese a lady never fears insult of any kind. The Japanese hate foreigners, but any foreign lady can travel in any portion of Japan, city or country, by day or night, unattended, and not receive the slightest insult.

Kindness to animals is also a trait of the Japanese. They never whip horses, kick dogs or cats or throw stones at them, and they never shoot animals.

One may see deer running about the streets of cities and being fed promiscuously by the people. They love nature, and instead of shooting a fine bird, they will stop, take out a brush and roll of paper kept about their persons for the purpose, and sketch the attitude of the bird and its carriage of head and wings.

There is so much similarity in the dress of boys and girls that it is difficult for a stranger to distinguish the sexes.

The houses all have movable partitions and walls, so that in summer they can be taken out and the air allowed to circulate through the entire house.

The tea which is served to guests often costs from $15 to $20 per pound, and is kept in air-tight cans.

The people are extremely honest. The houses have no doors, windows, locks, stoves, or mode of heating, and money or valuables left lying about are never touched. Many small booths are left without a keeper, the prices of things being marked on them and the money-drawer left out for customers to take their own change.

"AUGUSTUS," said Angelina to her lover, "you know that father has recently invested in a Western silver mine, and is going there at once, and I cannot leave mother alone. So I ask you, dear Augustus, how long would you be willing to wait for me?"

"Wait for you, my darling?" exclaimed Augustus, with deep emotion, for his was no fleeting love. "I will wait for you until we learn how the silver mines turn out."

LONG AGO.

BY RITA.

Long ago
We parted in our madness—
Long ago!
Laughed farewell in seeming gladness,
Masking o'er the weary sadness,
Yet I know—

Long ago
That when we parted—
Long ago!
When we crushed the tears that started
Lest they'd show us broken-hearted—
Yet I know—

Long ago
That the ocean's sob and swell,
Soft and low,
On the shore sobbed sad farewell,
To our hopes a funeral knell,
Long ago!

Yet I know,
Though we parted without token,
Still I know,
Though no sad regrets were spoken,
Yet our human hearts were broken,
Long ago!

ONLY A GIRL.

BY M. E. B.

CHAPTER I.

MABEL BURNISTON was Lady Burniston's youngest daughter—youngest and only unmarried daughter; all the others—and there had been four of them—were satisfactorily settled.

That Mabel was Lady Burniston's daughter is said advisedly, for though of course she was Sir John Burniston's daughter too, no one ever spoke of Sir John as having anything or being anything. He was one of the many nobodies of life. But his wife was far from being nobody.

A woman who has brought up five daughters, and married four of them off as such reached the age of nineteen, certainly deserves to be considered somebody amongst English matrons; especially when it is borne in mind that these four young ladies had not been remarkable for good looks, neither had they any fortunes—at least none worth speaking of.

Now it was Mabel's turn, and if the first four had done well, she was expected by her mother to do still better; for, unlike her sisters, Mabel Burniston was exceedingly pretty, so pretty that already she was acknowledged as the beauty of the season.

She was rather small and very fair; but her figure was as perfect in shape as her face in color.

Her hair was of that bright golden hue which is still so uncommon, in spite of all that can be done by "auriferous fluid" and other preparations.

She wore this golden hair in a thick fringe on her white forehead, coming down nearly to the delicately pencilled eyebrows, beneath which shone out a pair of the most lovely dazzling blue eyes that ever bewitched mortal man.

Very young, very fond of pleasure, full of life and spirits, and an acknowledged belle, it was no wonder, perhaps, that Mabel should be a flirt.

Still it was a pity, thought her mother, because it might spoil her prospects; it was a pity, thought her cousin Douglas M'Kenzie, because it might break his heart.

It was a warm afternoon in May, and Douglas, a dark, handsome, grave-looking young man, was sitting in his aunt's London drawing-room, nursing his hat and stick, and talking earnestly to Mabel, who was sometimes listening, sometimes teazing her canary bird, whose gilt cage hung amidst the flowers in the window.

"And now will you not allow that I had some reason for my ill-temper, and forgive me, and let us be friends again?" said Douglas, getting up and coming over to Mabel, who was occupied with the canary.

"No; I like Captain Maudesley, and he waltzes divinely, and I mean to dance with him as often as I like; and I don't allow that you have any right to lecture me about it," spoke Mabel, carelessly.

"No right! Do you mean that, Mabel?" asked Douglas, tenderly and reproachfully.

"Yes, Douglas, I do mean it, if I am to be bothered about every man I am the least bit civil to, and taken to task about every round dance I give to any one except yourself. It's a bore!" exclaimed the spoilt beauty, pettishly.

A sort of spasm passed over Douglas M'Kenzie's dark, grave face as he said, bitterly, "Then my love is a bore to you Mabel. It has come to that already?"

"Jealousy's always a bore," answered his cousin, lightly.

"Jealousy is a part of love," said Douglas, sadly; "and I must have been more than human," he added, "if I had not been jealous last night, when you not only could not keep one dance for me, but had not even a word or a smile for me, though there were plenty for those empty-headed fools you chose to flirt with."

"There, now you are getting angry," said Mabel, with provoking coolness, sinking down as she spoke, with an air of pretended fatigue, on a low chair.

Then raising those lovely blue eyes slowly to her cousin's troubled face, she said:

"If you don't like my ways, cousin Douglas, perhaps you had better not bother your wise head any more about me."

"Don't like your ways! O Mab, Mab, when you know how I worship you!" cried Douglas, suddenly dropping on his knees beside her, and covering her little hands with kisses.

"Don't Douglas; suppose mamma were to come in," said Mabel, with a look of gratified vanity, but otherwise unmoved by the passionate outburst.

"I wish she would come in, and I would tell her the truth—tell her how I love you, and that you have promised to be my wife. I wish you had let me tell her before," Douglas said.

"If you want everything between us to be at an end, you could not do better than tell her at once," said Mabel, turning petulantly away; "and, for my part, I give you my permission to do it," she added carelessly, looking from the window as she spoke.

Douglas M'Kenzie's face turned very pale.

"Are you thinking of what you are saying, Mabel?" he asked very gravely.

"Of course I am; I never speak without thinking," she replied, with a little affected laugh.

"O God, Mabel! and I thought you loved me!" exclaimed the man, with such a tone of despair in his voice that it moved Mabel for a moment.

"So I do," she said hastily, "so I do, as my cousin; as my friend if you like; but ——"

"You loved me in a different way once. It is the old love I want, the love you promised me last year. If you are going to tell me that you can no longer be mine heaven help me!"

He came close to her where she stood by the window, and tried to look into her face, but the blue eyes were bent resolutely on the ground, and she only answered nervously and hastily:

"You do take things so strangely Douglas, and use such strong expressions; I wish you wouldn't; and it is no use talking about last year. I was almost a child then, and things are so different now."

Douglas's dark stern face grew darker and sterner.

"That means," he said, "that now you have experienced a few weeks of a London season, and find that your beauty brings you admirers by the score, you think that you can afford to throw away my honest love as a thing of no worth. My pain is nothing to you. Mabel, upon my soul, I believe you are a heartless flirt."

"Very well, Mr. M'Kenzie, then perhaps you had better bid me Good afternoon." It would be a pity that you should waste any more of your valuable time talking to such a worthless individual," his cousin said coolly, though her cheek reddened with anger.

Douglas M'Kenzie looked at her earnestly for a moment, but the pretty face wore a mocking smile.

There was no sign of feeling of any kind after that slight flush of anger, and in silence he turned and left the room.

"Poor Douglas, he'll be dreadful wretched now," comfortably observed Mabel to herself when he was gone, "and it is all his own fault. I didn't want to come to a downright quarrel; but it is just as well perhaps. I shouldn't wonder but he will come to-night and try to make it up, but I shan't. It would be awkward to have him always spooning after me just now;" and Mabel tripped across the room to a mirror and began trying the effect in her hair of various flowers which she selected from a magnificent bouquet sent her that morning.

Mabel was very fond of looking in the glass.

Much as she was admired, she had not perhaps amongst all her adorers so ardent an admirer as herself.

That evening there was a dance at the Burniston's; not a ball, but a quiet, friendly affair.

Lady Burniston was rather famous for this sort of entertainment, and some ill-natured persons had been known to remark that those four daughters who had been settled so well had been "waltzed into matrimony."

Douglas M'Kenzie gloomily eating his dinner by himself at his club, and drinking more sherry than was good for him, decided not to go to this party; but almost as soon as he had arrived at this decision, changed his mind, went to his chambers, made an elaborate toilette, put himself into a hansom, and was driven to his aunt's house.

Almost the first object his eyes lighted on as he entered the drawing-room, which had been partially cleared for dancing, was Mabel, exquisitely dressed, looking distractingly pretty, being whirled round to the sweet strains of the "Soldaten Lieder" in the arms of a tall fair man, the happy possessor of a quite remarkable amber moustache and whiskers, and (so it was said) of about 250,000 per annum.

People had begun already to notice that Hugh Chatterton seemed taken with the pretty Mabel, and to-night the flirtation was very obvious indeed.

As they waltzed, her head, with its marvellous golden coils, almost rested on his shoulder, and her blue eyes were raised to his in a manner calculated to deprive him in a very short time of any small bit of peace of mind he might have left.

Douglas frowned savagely as he stood for a few moments watching the pair.

There was a block in the doorway, and he had to wait for a pause in the dance before he could make his way further into the room.

Presently there came bustling up to him a little red-haired man in spectacles.

"Ah! M'Kenzie, how do?" said this individual, who was generally known as "Tommy Otway."

Douglas only vouchsafed a growl by way of answer.

"Something up it appears between Chatterton there and your fair cousin," thereat remarked Mr. Otway, glancing through his shining spectacles at the dancers; "that's the third time they have danced together already this evening."

"And what does it matter to you with whom my cousin dances?" asked Douglas, fiercely, turning round upon the little man.

"Oh, nothing in the world, my dear fellow, nothing in the world! Only a man can't help using his eyes, you know; and this is a free country."

"Deuced deal too free," muttered Douglas, as he moved away."

"Let me introduce you to a partner for the Lancers, Douglas," said Lady Burniston, whom he encountered in his passage through the room.

"No, thanks; shan't dance to-night," he answered shortly.

"Tiresome savage," his aunt said to herself as, smiling sweetly, she sailed on in her brown velvet and guipure.

A few paces further on Douglas was brought to a stand close behind an ottoman, on which were seated two old ladies.

"Shocking little flirt!" he heard one observe, looking after Mabel, who just then went by on Chatterton's arm; "shocking little flirt!"

The room was warm, and the lady addressed was stout, and it was in a very spiteful tone that she replied.

"Flirt, indeed! The way that girl has been going on this evening is simply disgusting! I'm glad I'm not her mother!" and she fanned herself vigorously!

"Spiteful old cats," thought Douglas as he moved on; but there was a sharp pain at his heart.

He was a man who hated the very name of flirt, and he loved his cousin Mabel very dearly.

In vain he tried to get speech of her that night; she would not even see him, and there was generally a little crowd of men about her.

Sad at heart, towards the end of the evening he sauntered into the conservatory, and there he came suddenly upon Mabel and Chatterton.

Mabel was giving her partner a rose from her bouquet, and he as he took it kissed the hand that gave it, and was not rebuked.

Only three evenings ago she had given a flower to Captain Maudesley under precisely similar circumstances; and yet ere he turned away Douglas heard Chatterton say:

"And so you don't like Maudesley?"

And Mabel replied:

"No, he is so very military, and I don't like army men as a rule."

"And no doubt to-morrow she'll tell some other fellow just the contrary," thought Douglas, bitterly; but he was right; she did, or she would if it had suited her to do so.

Mabel pursued her own way, and soon became noted not only as a reckless flirt, but a most capricious and heartless coquette.

Her cousin Douglas was only one sufferer amongst many.

CHAPTER II.

I CALL 'em the three victims," said Tommy Otway. He was seated in a luxurious chair in the smoking-room of his club, and addressed himself to a small circle of admiring listeners, mostly very young men.

"Who are the three victims; let's hear?" said another man, sauntering up.

"Why, Chatterton, Maudesley, and Branston. That little Mabel has played the very deuce with them all."

"Yes, that she has," observed the new comer. "Chatterton, in a fit of disgust, has gone and proposed to the very plainest girl of the season, and, what's more to the purpose, he is going to marry her. Maudesley has sold out, and is now somewhere up in the North—has turned hermit or landscape-gardener, or something of the sort; and Branston—well, that is a more serious affair. He blew his brains out, poor fellow, and they say it was her fault. But I don't believe that; he was always rather weak in the head, and I for one don't blame Mabel in the affair."

"What! has she bewitched you too, Cameron?" asked Otway.

"No, no, quite the reverse," drawled Cameron.

"That means you have bewitched her, I suppose," remarked one of the others; and as Cameron was famed for his extreme ugliness, there was a general laugh.

The subject of the merriment took it very good-temperedly; he was used to being laughed at, and when there was silence again he observed coolly—

"If you'd like to hear a piece of news I'll tell you who's her last conquest, and that is Frere Berkeley. Every one was noticing the affair last night at Lady Wycherly's."

"Frere Berkeley! has he come back?" exclaimed two or three together.

"Oh, Frere's here, is he? Then the Elmers are in town," said Otway, very quietly.

"Right you are, Tommy; the Elmers are in town," replied Cameron.

"And how is she looking?"

"Haven't seen her myself; but, I hear, lovelier than ever."

"H'm. Supposing what you say about the little Mabel to be true, there are the materials for a very pretty little comedy, or tragedy, as the case may be."

"Oh! say comedy. We don't go in for tragedy in these days."

"Well, whichever it's going to be, I should like to see the drama played out. Pity the season's so nearly over."

It was near the end of July when the conversation just reported took place in the smoking-room of a not very exclusive club patronized by Mr. Otway.

Early in August, the Burnistons left town, and the play the little inquisitive red-haired man was interested in was not played out till the following November; but as it happened, he did witness the gradual unfolding of this drama in high life, for he managed to get himself invited down to Fairbank, the Wycherlys' place in Hampshire.

Lady Wycherly was Mabel's eldest sister, a plain, but lively and attractive woman, who possessed the art of making her husband's house very pleasant both to his friends and her own, so Fairbank was always full of visitors.

Amongst the guests on this occasion were Mabel Burniston, Douglas M'Kenzie, Frere Berkeley, and Mr. and Mrs. Elmer.

The characters of the play, which Mr. Otway wished to see played out.

Mr. and Mrs. Elmer were one of those strikingly ill-matched pairs which it makes one indignant to see.

He was sour-looking, ugly, and old; she was young and very lovely. In style she was a bright blonde like Mabel Burniston, but she was far more beautiful.

A sweet gentle creature, of a loving but timid and yielding disposition, not very clever, wholly devoted to selfishness and vanity, Lilian Elmer was a woman whose path in the world ought to have been made smooth for her by kind and helping hands; but it had not been so. Her story was a sad one.

Three years ago she had loved Frere Berkeley, and would have married him, but her father had interfered (for Frere was poor then), had sent her lover away, and married her to the old man she now called husband.

She did not love him—she would have hated him had she not been of too gentle a nature for that, and Frere Berkeley was always near her—Frere, handsome, young, and loving her only too well.

It was a sad story, and people talked, and wondered how it would end. This had been going on now for about two years.

"Of course you know, dear, that there are stories about him and Mrs. Elmer?" said Lady Wycherly to Mabel Burniston.

The two sisters were sitting before the fire in Lady Wycherly's dressing-room, indulging in tea and talk before dinner. Mabel had just arrived.

"What stories?" asked Mabel.

"Oh, she was in love with him before she was married, you know, and he was awfully in love with her, and has gone on being in love with her since, which he should not have done, of course, and wherever they go, he goes, and so people talk."

"Mary, I do think you are rather fond of scandal," said Mabel, impatiently. "I don't believe there is anything but friendship between him and Mrs. Elmer."

"My dear! Did I say there was? I only wished to give you some idea of the sort of man he is, or rather the sort of man people say he is, as he seems to have taken your fancy, Mab."

"Who told you he had taken my fancy?" asked Mabel, quickly.

"Well, mother did," said Lady Wycherly, after an instant's hesitation.

"Then mother has been writing about me! Now tell me what she said," Mabel cried, imperiously.

"No, her letter was private and confidential," replied Lady Wycherly, laughing.

"It doesn't matter. I daresay it was nothing complimentary," Mabel said carelessly as she went off to dress.

Lady Wycherly, when she was alone, took from her pocket the letter which had been alluded to, and read one passage in it over again:

"He is really immensely rich; I am told so by people who know and whom I can depend on. I trust to you, dear Mary, to manage the affair, for I am tied here by Sir John's gout, and goodness knows when I shall be able to get away. Of course I know all about the Mrs. Elmer story; but there is not the least doubt but that Mabel may have him now if she likes, and the affair will soon be forgotten by everybody"—so it ran.

There was more of it, but Mary Wycherly read no further; she folded the letter with a half sigh, and murmured to herself something about "Belgravian morality," but she checked the words on her lips, for it was her own mother whose she was judging.

There was at Fairbank, as there is in many houses, a small room opening out of the large drawing-room, a cosy, half-boudoir, half-study apartment, furnished in boudoir style, and used largely for flirtations, but for little else.

In this room, on that same afternoon, there were two people talking earnestly together in the firelight, which alone illuminated the small apartment.

It wanted quite three-quarters of an hour to dinner time; but both the lady and gentleman were in dinner dress.

A dark handsome man, with a fine aristocratic face; a very beautiful woman, with masses of golden curls piled high above her white neck. She looked very young, but she had been married for three years.

"Lilian, in our position we cannot afford to indulge in small scruples," said the man.

"But Frere, I know—oh, I know so well, that I can no longer talk of right and wrong; they exist no more for me! Still, there seems a meanness in this that revolts me," the woman exclaimed. "Suppose she should get to love you?"

"She loves no one but herself," was the answer. "You need not fear for her. A woman without a heart can always take care of herself."

He spoke very coolly, and the fair woman made no further remonstrance.

"Frere," she whispered presently, looking up at him with a frightened expression in her lovely eyes, "it gets worse and worse. He threatened to strike me today."

"Curse him, the miserable, cowardly scoundrel," said Frere, his face turning white with rage. "I wish I had been by."

"I am very glad you were not, Frere. That is what I am more afraid of than anything—you and he quarreling."

And she looked round nervously towards the door as she spoke.

"Why? He could not hurt me," said Berkeley, with a contemptuous little laugh.

"No, no, but think what he might do to me."

"By Heaven, if ever he touched a hair of your head——"

"He might do worse than that; he might take me away somewhere and shut me up in some dreadful place. I am in his power."

She shuddered and trembled violently.

"Don't, Lilian," broke out Frere, passionately: "don't look like that. It makes me mad to think I can't take you away now this moment, safe out of his reach for ever, Lily, my own——"

The rustle of a silk gown was heard; someone had entered the next room.

The young man quietly took up a wide-awake hat and overcoat which lay on a chair near, and in five seconds had disappeared by the way he came, through one of the French windows which opened on to the lawn.

Lilian Elmer was alone, and the next minute came forward with a perfectly calm air and a conventional smile, to greet her hostess. Lady Wycherly looked rather surprised.

"You came almost like a ghost out of that little room," she said, laughingly. "I did not think any one would be down yet. But perhaps it is later than I thought."

"Oh, no, you are not late, I think," said Mrs. Elmer.

"I told Simpson not to put much light in that room, but it seems he misunderstood me, for he has put none," said Lady Wycherly.

"The firelight is very nice; I have been sitting there," said Lilian Elmer, quietly.

People began to come in. There was a little stir as Mabel appeared.

She was generally rather over-dressed, and to-night she wore a rich dead-white silk, with a magnificent crimson rose in her hair, and was looking her best, a fact of which she was fully aware.

Her cousin Douglas went forward and greeted her eagerly.

He had not seen her for two months, and had now come down to Fairbank intending to prosecute his old claims; for Mabel, by her treatment of them, had plainly shown that she cared for none of her London adorers, and Douglas hoped that this might be because she cared for him.

He blamed himself now for having been too hard upon her, and was prepared to be very humble.

"It seems an age since I saw you, Mab," he managed to say in the moment he was beside her.

"It doesn't to me. But I'm very glad to see you, Douglas," Mabel answered, brightly; and that and the clasp of the hand she gave him, made Douglas happy—for an hour or so.

Frere Berkeley was the last to make his appearance.

He had kept them all waiting quite five minutes after dinner was announced, but Frere was used to keep people waiting. He apologized very carelessly to Lady Wycherly.

"I rode over to Thornhill this afternoon, and have only just got back," he said.

"Rather a wet day for so long a ride," remarked Otway.

"Eh?" said Berkeley, with a long, cool stare that caused the impertinent little man's confidence to suddenly desert him, and made him very glad of the bustle of the move towards the dining-room.

When the women were in the drawing-room alone after dinner, Mrs. Elmer went and seated herself by Mabel, and in rather a hesitating manner began to talk to her.

Mabel was inclined to be cold and repellant at first, but the evident shyness and nervousness of the other woman soon disarmed her.

"This is a delightful house. I have never been here before," Mrs. Elmer said.

"Oh, do you like the house?" said Mabel: "I do not care for it; it is so thoroughly modern. I like an old rambling place better."

"Do you? I cannot endure those long, dark passages and haunted-looking galleries; they make me so nervous," said Mrs. Elmer, with a slight shiver.

"Why, you turn white only at the thought of them," exclaimed Mabel, laughing a little.

The other laughed too.

"Yes, I know I am very silly about such things, but I was always such a coward," she said.

Mabel went on talking to her very graciously, and all the time she wondering what Frere Berkeley could have seen in that nervous and seemingly silly woman to charm him for so long.

Mabel did not doubt but that the old bondage was at an end! for had not handsome, careless Frere become her own slave?

She watched anxiously for his appearance in the drawing-room; for she had not sat near him at dinner, and had not spoken to him yet.

When he did come in he caught sight of Mabel at once, and came straight across to her.

"How good it was of fate to bring me down here just now, Miss Burniston," he observed, in the low tone he always used when addressing women.

He had come to stand behind Mabel, and leant on the back of the sofa on which she and Mrs. Elmer were seated, as he spoke.

Mabel turned a little and looked up at him with the coquettish air which had become part of her very self, and she answered saucily:

"And why are you so pleased with fate this evening, Mr. Berkeley?"

"Because I have the opportunity of renewing, and I hope improving, my acquaintance with Miss Burniston," said Frere.

"I am quite sure that is a very small boon for which to thank fate," laughed Mabel.

"I do not agree with you," he said, softly; and he looked into Mabel's blue eyes, and Mabel blushed as well as smiled.

All this time Frere had seemed quite oblivious of the presence of the lady who still sat beside Miss Burniston.

Mabel thought Mrs. Elmer was hurt by this, for she looked pale and absent-minded, and soon rose and moved away to another part of the room.

Frere came round and dropped into the vacated place.

No one knew better how to make himself agreeable to a woman when he liked than Frere Berkeley, and he liked now, and before the evening was over he had managed to establish an excellent understanding between himself and Mabel Burniston.

Douglas M'Kenzie had been seized upon early in the evening by his host, Sir George and set down to whist with Mr. Elmer and two stout dowagers who were devoted to the game.

Douglas had one of the dowagers for a partner, and at his peril was obliged to attend to his cards; yet through the back of his head he seemed to see Mabel, and his quick ears caught much of what passed between her and her new friend; and Douglas wondered miserably whether this were only the beginning of another of Mabel's reckless flirtations, or whether this visit would see the end of his own last chance. Sour-looking, hard-featured Mr. Elmer glanced now and then at the two and seemed well satisfied.

The days passed. Lady Wycherly's guests walked, rode, drove, and sometimes amused and often bored each other, as people do at all country houses.

Frere Berkeley was devoted to Mabel, and Lady Wycherly, mindful of her mother's wishes in the matter, did not interfere, except once, when she had thought it necessary to give one little word of warning.

"My dear Mab," she had then said, sweetly, "are you engaged to Mr. Berkeley?"

"No, Mary: you know I am not," Mabel had answered.

"Then, dear, I don't think it quite the thing for you to be continually walking and driving about with him alone. I don't think mother would approve of it."

"Yes she would: Frere Berkeley's rich, and that is all mother wants in a son-in-law," Mabel answered, with a sneer that was not pretty.

Not noticing the sneer, her sister said:

"But why does he not propose in form, if that is how it is to be?"

"Would you have a man propose before he has known a girl a week?"

"No; but neither would I have a girl always walking and driving about alone with a man to whom she is not engaged, especially a man bearing the character Frere Berkeley does."

"Uncharitable nonsense!" Mabel had angrily cried at that; and so there had been no more said.

To Mrs. Elmer, Mabel had taken a great fancy, and was with her a good deal. Frankly acknowledging, as Mabel did, Lilian Elmer's great beauty, the fact increased her own sense of triumph, and she was ready to patronize Frere's old love, whom he had deserted for her.

Then her triumph was such a perfectly legitimate one.

For had she not Religion, Morality, and Society on her side, all of which were in danger of being outraged till she had come to the rescue?

Mr. Thomas Otway, behind his shining spectacles, watched the play, and for some time he was puzzled; but he watched patiently, and after a while he made one or two discoveries, and then performed the process known as "putting two and two together," and when he had done that he looked out for some one to whom he could communicate the result.

[TO BE CONTINUED.]

"SILOTWOR" is a new explosive ten times the strength of gunpowder, exploding without smoke or noise. A Russian patented it.

AMUSING METAPHORS.

A MAN once asked a son of Erin if the roads in Ireland were good. Pat replied: "Yes; they are so fine, that I wonder you do not import some of them. Let me see—there's the road to love, strewed with roses; to matrimony, through nettles; to honor, through the camp; to prison, through the law; and to the undertaker's through physic."

"Have you any road to preferment?" was asked. "Yes, faith, we have; but that is the dirtiest road in the kingdom."

The answer of Apollonius to Vespasian is not without humor and instruction. Vespasian asked him:

"What caused Nero's overthrow?"

He answered:

"Nero could touch and tune the harp well; but in government, sometimes he used to wind the pins too high, sometimes to let them down too low."

And certain it is that nothing destroys authority so much as the unequal and untimely interchange of power pressed too far and relaxed too much.

George Stephenson was once asked by a scientific lady what he considered the most powerful force in nature.

"Oh," said he in a gallant spirit, "I will soon answer that question: it is the eye of the woman for the man who loves her; for if a woman look with affection on a young man, and he should go to the uttermost ends of the earth, the recollection of that look will bring him back. There is no other force in nature that could do that."

Equally ready with a similitude was the negro who, when giving evidence in court, was asked about the honesty of a neighbor.

"I know nothing against him," was the reply; "but if I was a chicken, I would roost high when he was hanging around."

A thoughtful writer describes one-eyed travelers, who see a great deal of some particular class of objects and are blind to all others, and adds:

"The Irish jaunting car, in which the passengers sit back to back, is a sort of type of what beliefs many tourists in Ireland. Each sees a great deal, and reports faithfully what he has seen on one side of the road, and the other on the other. One will have seen all that is green, and the other, all that is orange."

"A cunning knave can form no notion of a nobler nature," says the writer. "He is like the goats on Robinson Crusoe's island, which saw clearly everything below them, but very imperfectly what was above them; so that Robinson could never get at them from the valleys; but when he came upon them from the hilltop, he took them quite by surprise."

"You look," said an Irishman to a pale haggard smoker, "as if you had got out of your grave to light your cigar, and couldn't find your way back again."

A schoolmaster describing a money-lender, says:

"He serves you in the present tense, he lends you in the conditional mood, keeps you in the subjunctive, and ruins you in the future."

A close observer of human nature remarks:

"Time marches on with the slow, measured tread of the man working by the day."

A French author is charged with the prediction that France will throw herself into the arms of the liberating sword. That is not quite so bad as the politican's speech: "We will burn our ships, and with every sail unfurled, steer boldly out into the ocean of freedom!"

A clergyman on board a ship began a sermon in the following manner:

"Dear friends, I shall embark my exhortation on the barge of my lips, in order to cross the stormy ocean of your attention, and in hope of arriving safely at the port of your ears."

A learned counsellor, in the middle of an affecting appeal in court on a slander suit, treated his hearers to the following flight of genius:

"Slander, gentlemen, like a boa-constrictor of gigantic size and immeasurable proportions, wraps the coil of its unwieldly body about its unfortunate victim, and heedless of the shrieks of agony that come from the uttermost depths of its victim's soul—loud and verberating as the night-thunder that rolls in the heavens—it finally breaks its unlucky neck upon the iron wheel of public opinion, forcing him first to desperation, then to madness, and finally crushing him in the hideous jaws of mortal death."

A young lawyer employed to defend a culprit charged with stealing a pig, resolved to convince the court that he was born to shine. Accordingly, he proceeded to deliver the following brilliant exordium: "May it please the court and gentlemen of the jury: while Europe is bathed in blood; while classic Greece is struggling for her rights and liberties, and trampling the unhallowed altars of the bearded Infidels to dust; while America shines forth the brightest orb in the political sky—I, with due diffidence, rise to defend the cause of this humble hog-thief."

"Pray, my lord," said a gentleman to a late respected and rather whimsical judge, "what is the difference between law and equity courts?"—"Very little in the end," replied his lordship; "they only differ as far as time is concerned. At common law, you are done for at once; in equity, you are not so easily disposed of. The former is a bullet, which is instantaneously and charmingly effective; the latter is an angler's hook, which plays with its victim before it kills it. The one is prussic acid, the other laudanum."

Scientific and Useful.

PAPER.—A valuable discovery, which bids fair to create a revolution in the ranks of the roofer's trade, is the recent utilization of compressed paper pulp as a substitute for slate in the manufacture of tiles for roofing.

PINE LEAVES.—The fibre from pine leaves as a substitute for jute, flax, etc., is now used in the manufacture of carpets. The prepared material bears a close resemblance to yarn and is capable of being dyed or bleached and woven in patterns. It bids fair to become a considerable industry.

GEAR TEETH.—Gear teeth, generally have one corner broken off first, after which they rapidly go to pieces. This may be avoided and the teeth made much stronger by thinning down the edges with a file, thereby bring the whole strain along the centre of the tooth. Gear teeth fixed this way will not break unless the strain be sufficient to break off the whole tooth.

ENGRAVINGS.—Engravings may be transferred on white paper as follows: Place the engraving a few seconds over the vapor of iodine. Dip a slip of white paper in a weak solution of starch, and when dry in a weak solution of oil of vitriol. When again dry, lay a slip upon the engraving and place both for a few minutes under a press. The engraving will be reproduced in all its delicacy and finish. Lithographs and printed matter cannot be so transferred with equal success.

RAILROAD GATES.—An English firm has patented an ingenious invention for the better control of level-crossing gates on railways. The gates will be worked by manual labour in the signal-box. These gates, which are of light iron instead of the old-fashioned heavy wood, are closed and opened by means of rods and chains working on wheels connected with the back style of the gate. These wheels are covered in with cast-iron 'wells' or 'boxes,' and part of the top of these is movable, permitting free and easy access to the underground workings. The rods are protected by channels of wood, iron, or brick.

STREET PAVING.—A novel method of street-paving has been tried with some success in Berlin; but as its trial only covers twelve months of traffic, it can hardly be held to have proved its superiority over other systems. The material is asphalt, but not treated in the usual manner. Bricks impregnated with the compound, under which treatment they lose their natural brittleness and become elastic, and capable of resisting heavy pressure and damp, are laid in rows just like the wood-blocks used for a similar purpose in this country. The new paving is said to last well and to afford a sure foothold to horses. There is certainly an opening for improvement in our present systems of paving.

Farm and Garden.

FIGHTING.—When the cocks have been picking each other until the combs and wattles bleed profusely pour strong alum water over their heads, which will cause the bleeding to cease.

SPORTSMEN.—The sportsman often does more damage to the crops of this country than can be estimated. He makes no distinction between insect-eating birds and those that live on grain or seeds.

SOILING CATTLE.—Although it requires more labor to soil cattle than to afford pasture, yet the saving of fences—if the farm is large and divided into several fields—is sometimes greater than the cost of the extra labor involved.

HINTS.—Tubs for butter should be made of wood that will not impart its odor to butter. A good plan is first to pack the tub in strong brine for a few days before using. If you have a pasture that has been overrun by weeds let it be given up to sheep, as they will eat many kinds of plants that other stock refuse.

THE HORSES.—When heels and toes are required on a horse's shoes, instead of having the shoe turned down for heels, have the heels and toes of cast steel and welded on. The heels should be put on half an inch from end of shoe and placed lengthwise. Look often at the animal's feet and legs. Disease or wounds in those parts, if neglected, soon become dangerous.

PUMPKINS.—Grow a crop of pumpkins, as they will keep well for winter use and make an excellent change for the pigs. A farm kettle for cooking pumpkins will enable the farmer to utilize the crop to better advantage, and as they can be grown in the corn-field after the last working of the corn, they entail but little labor and yield well in proportion to cost, while they are very highly relished by all classes of stock.

LAND.—Land that has been bountifully fed will be in a better condition for a succeeding crop, while that which has been overtaxed will gradually lose fertility and entail an additional expense every day. It is an old rule that proper field culture should be the same as for a garden spot, which is to use plenty of manure on small areas, work the soil to a fine condition for the seed, keep down the grass and weeds, and make every inch of space produce to its fullest capacity, instead of wasting time, labor and manure over large fields that cannot be properly cultivated.

WE may be as good as we please, if we please to be good.

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Of Amusements.

"Life," said a genial but cynical thinker, with equal wit and wisdom, "would be really quite endurable if it were not for its amusements." How many of us, in middle age at least, have, after our own humble fashion, come to exactly the same easy-going conclusion!

As long as we are allowed to pursue the even tenor of our way unmolested, to rise in the morning to our accustomed tub, to go through our sober round of wonted duties, to dine off our leg of mutton and apple pudding at our own unpretending domestic table, to enjoy our evening pipe, or our quiet chat over the knitting and the work basket, and to go to bed decorously at half past ten, we are, in our peaceful, uneventful fashion, perfectly happy and contented. But, when the boys and girls —those reckless disturbers of domestic bliss!—insist upon dragging us off for a month or so down by the seaside or elsewhere, we feel in our hearts that this is too much, and that we can get along very well indeed nowadays without amusements, at least of certain kinds.

For the respectable middle aged citizen or citizeness in this modern age to get up after tea or dinner, as the case may be, and go off seeking amusement at any of the recognized establishments supposed to purvey that commodity to our towns and cities, is really too preposterous and serious an undertaking.

These things are all very well in their way while one is yet sweet one-and-twenty, but, as time begins to grizzle the beard, and faint lines pucker up the once smooth and unclouded forehead, middle-aged man has his doubts as to whether, after all, the game is now really worth the candle. He finds it harder and harder to tear himself away from home; the attraction grows weaker and weaker, as the scientific men would put it, while the resistance to be overcome grows greater and greater with every year.

A dance used to be a delightful thing indeed before one was married, and when one had a chance of meeting Amelia there for half an hour; but, now that one sees Amelia every day from morning to night, and goes to the dance only for the sake of one's daughters, why, the amusement of the thing is not somehow quite so apparent as it used to be some twenty years ago!

On the other hand, maturer age undoubtedly gives quite as much as it takes away, even in this very matter of amusement. While we are young, we go out of our way too much to get ourselves amused; we are always seeking out pleasure and excitement, always trying to find some fresh opportunity of agreeable stimulation.

But it is a well-known observation that the more directly we aim at pleasure, the more does pleasure seem to flit and evade us. She is a coquette that flies if you pursue, but coyly seeks you if you pay her scant attention. This is a truth that middle-age alone begins thoroughly to appreciate. The best amusements are those that come of themselves as it were—those that obtrude themselves upon us and grow on us slowly as the years grow fleeter.

Middle age learns to reap the harvest of a quiet eye from many things which youth passes by with supercilious contempt or silent inattention. We find the world less exciting than of old, it is true, but more beautiful and more interesting each year as we pass the line of thirty; we pitch our hopes lower, and we discover that they are more often fairly realized. We do not go out of our way so much to seek amusement; and, behold, amusement comes out of her way to seek us!

We stay at home more, and find in books and conversation and household duties a calm pleasure that we could not have appreciated in our noisier and more rackety younger existence.

Life grows grayer, some people think, as forty approaches. Nay, not so; it grows calmer and more peaceable; and at the same time it grows more unselfish.

Moreover, it is incidental to the active pursuit of pleasure that, when we aim at it too directly, we feel always the bitterness of disappointment, and so become cynical and complaining. It is young men and young women who write all the Byronic poetry of blighted hopes and blasted aspirations; it is very young people who discover that existence is a mistake, and that the true function of the poet is to write threnodies. "Life," said the boy of the period on his tenth birthday, "isn't all that it's cracked up to be." "The world is hollow," says the little girl pessimist in the comic paper, "and my doll is stuffed with sawdust." That is the natural reaction from a view of life which considers that it ought to be made up of exciting adventures. Maturer age can afford to do without these romantic sorrows.

And yet it is of very little use to rail at amusements in the midst of an age which is probably more amused than any other since the beginning of all things. Every day sees more and more places and kinds of amusement of every sort opened throughout town and country. A trip to the sea-side, the mountains or even Europe has become as small a matter as a trip to the next village. It is an age strenuously bent upon getting amused; and it will certainly get itself amused if money and buildings and appliances will help it at all in that matter. It will have summer resorts and gardens and plays and races and games and galas to its heart's content. It will have gigantic parades and fireworks and monster meetings and centenaries and musical festivals and demonstrations and excursions, and all the rest of it. It will run over all the world in search of amusement, and, when it is tired, it will come back at last from "seas and skies," castles and abbeys, to lanes and flowers. But, let middle age preach as it will, youth will have its cakes and ale to the end of the chapter.

How useless our lives seem to us sometimes! How we long for an opportunity to perform some great action! We become tired of the daily routine of home life, and imagine we could be far happier in other scenes. We think of life's great battle-field, and wish to be heroes. We think of the good we might do if our lot had been cast in different scenes. We forget that the world bestows no title as noble as father, mother, sister or brother. In the sacred precincts of home we have many chances for heroism. The daily acts of self-denial for the good of a loved one, the gentle word of soothing for another's trouble, the care of the sick, may all seem as nothing, yet who can tell the good they accomplish? Our slightest word may have an influence over another for good or evil. We are daily sowing the seed which will bring forth some sort of harvest. Well will it be for us if the harvest is one we will be proud to garner.

It is a great mistake to suppose that real honesty can ever be followed and maintained from motives of policy. Although the proverb, "Honesty is the best policy," in its broad and deep sense, is the very truth, those who take it as their motive to an honest life will miss both its truth and its gladness, because they have mistaken the meaning of honesty itself. They think of it only as a series of actions, whereas it is in truth a spirit that reigns supreme in the heart and shapes the life. He who is not imbued with this spirit, who covets the gains of dishonesty, and only resigns them in the hope that honesty may confer a greater gain, has yet to learn the meaning of honesty.

Strength of mind is not equivalent to perfect balance of judgment or evenness of power. As a rule, specially strong-minded persons are given to single ideas, which are held with great tenacity. Inventors represent this, as well as advocates of particular ideas. What is called strength of mind is the result of independent thinking; hence its basis is real thought. The first element towards it is inducing the young to think; hence even incorrect thinking should not be rudely reproved, but kindly and gently corrected.

He who lives only in the moment never spends that moment so well as he who has a large time-view, who recalls a worthy past and foresees a noble future. It needs no gift of prophecy to foretell that for such a one the best things are in store during coming years. The gifts of fortune may or may not come to him; troubles and trials may or may not afflict him; but in either case he will have within him that power and courage and joy that nothing can take away.

As "unfinished business" in legislation is one of the elements of confusion, so is it in our individual conduct. It becomes a "standing head" in every day's report. It is a cumulative evil, and while it dulls the daily life, confuses the daily thought, and mocks the good purpose, it closes many a life with the unsatisfactory epitaph "unfinished."

No man's acts die utterly; and, though his body may resolve into thin air, his good or bad deeds will still be bringing forth fruit after their kind and influencing future generations for all time to come. It is in this momentous and solemn fact that the great peril and responsibility of human existence lie.

"He who would eat the kernel must crack the nut—he who would have the gain must take the pain." Right judgment is the kernel of the whole great nut of life, but it is to be gained only by pain and diligence.

No one is exempt from calumny. Words said, the occasion of saying them not known, however justly reported, may bear a very different construction from what they would have done had the occasion been told.

We should choose our friends for what they are, not for what they have, and we should have them always with us—preserved in absence, and even after death in the "amber of memory."

Use law and physic only for necessity; they that use them otherwise abuse themselves into weak bodies and light purses. They are good remedies, bad businesses and worse recreations.

Consume little time in regret. The best repentance is reformation. What tears of contrition are powerless to effect, an altered life easily accomplishes.

As a mound of earth raised by the ants, or the sands in the hour glass, so religion, learning and riches increase only by degrees.

The power of doing good to worthy objects is the only enviable circumstance in the lives of people of fortune.

Rigor pushed too far is sure to miss its aim, however good, as the bow snaps that is bent too stiffly.

In this world it is not what we take up, but what we give up, that makes us rich.

He hath riches sufficient who hath enough to be charitable.

The World's Happenings.

Some fastidious base ball clubs own 500 bats.

The latest bird cage has glass sides with a wire top.

The bon ton way with a veil is to just leave the upper lip bare.

The Czar is rapidly becoming a proficient player on the cornet.

A soap-bubble blower was one of the attractions at the St. Louis Kirmess.

Mrs. Isaac Osterhout, of Wilkesbarre, Pa., left $600,000 to that town for a free library.

A law taxing cats in that State ten cents per head is projected by a legislator of Georgia.

Trenton has a ladies' society that has for its object the extermination of "rum and tobacco."

The outside seats of the Fifth avenue stages are now largely patronized by ladies in the evening.

W. W. Cole has started for foreign parts to pick up Asiatic and African curiosities for P. T. Barnum.

A schedule of charges for professional services has been agreed upon by the physicians of Naugatuck, Conn.

In Chesterfield county, Virginia, recently, a colored candidate for office was defeated because he wore a white shirt.

Some tobacco lands in Lancaster county, Pa., are said to yield a profit equivalent to a dollar a day per acre to their owners.

The Sioux tribe of Indians have a sub-chief who is named "The-man-who-ran-so-fast-that-the-wind-was-left-behind."

An infant that was bitten by a spider in New York, last week, died a few hours afterward from the effects of the bite.

Scott Bar, Cal., has the tallest postmaster in the United States. He stands 7 feet in his stockings and weighs 280 pounds.

Alfonso XIII., of Spain, has just celebrated his first birthday. His teeth somewhat marred the enjoyment of the occasion.

The Japanese government paper mill is manufacturing pocket handkerchiefs and clothing of paper pulp containing a mixture of linen threads.

Mayor Hewitt, of New York, says: "I smile when men talk to me of working 8 and 9 hours a day. I have all my life worked from 12 to 17 hours a day."

A suburban town school, a Boston paper mentions, uses bones from the village doctor's office with which to familiarize the children with the human anatomy.

A man fell through a defective sidewalk in Grand Rapids, Mich., and broke his leg. He will not bring suit against the city, as the leg was a wooden one.

The latest fad in London is a hygienic restaurant. It will be a dining place for dyspeptics, whose dinners will be actually prescribed for them when they go in.

The children of the blackest Africans are born whitish; in a month they become pale yellow, in a year brown, at four dirty black, and at six or seven glossy black.

Amy Avant, colored, died on a plantation in Marion county, S. C., recently, of measles. Her age, given as 122 years, is said to be "well attested by family records."

A Plainsfield, N. J., man died last week, and in a few days no less than four women, each claiming to be his wife, confronted the lady who thought she was his widow.

John H. Davis, of Pawtucket, has resigned his seat in the Rhode Island Legislature because he cannot afford to leave his business and work for the State at $1 a day.

Prince William, eldest son of the Crown Prince of Prussia, shuns the society of his wife, who has an absolute dread of her husband. He does not maltreat her beyond studied neglect.

One of the most eccentric suicides of recent occurrence was that of a Steuben, Me., man named Kelley, who went to the river, drove a stake, tied himself to it with a rope, and then drowned himself.

At the American Exhibition in London there is exhibited a fire-proof and water-proof villa composed entirely of straw. Every part of it from the foundations to the chimneys is of straw compressed to form artificial wood.

The lateness of the season in that section recalls the fact that on July 4, 1858, some boys in Cornish, N. H., went with an ox cart to the east side of Bald Mountain, near that town, and drew a load of snow into the village and amused themselves in snow balling.

Four medical students who started out in a yacht from Burlington, Vt., last week, in search of a sea-serpent, were becalmed a short distance off shore, and being minus oars, had to make the best of things until a breeze came along the next day. Their diet meanwhile consisted of air and water.

At Quito, the only city in the world on the line of the equator, the sun sets and rises at 6 o'clock the year round. Your clock may break down, your watch may stop, but the sun never makes a mistake there. When it disappears for the night it is 6 o'clock, and you can set your watch by it.

One day recently a boy, aged 7 years, who had been swimming at a wharf in New York, ran at the cry of "police," and, raising the lid of a box on an ice wagon, jumped into it to hide. A snap lock fastened the end down, and as nobody heard the poor lad's shouts and screams, he suffocated to death in what must have been horrible agony.

A social event happened in Chattanooga, Tenn., recently, and a reporter thus rises to the occasion in a local paper: "Miss Davis wore a beautiful dress of black satin, decolette, gold embroidered flounces and morchal neat roses. Mrs. L. S. Colyar looked lovely in a handsome costume of sophire blue velvet, entwaine, trimmed with indescent possomentries."

THE VAGRANT WIND.

BY J. CASSELL.

The wind comes whispering out of the west,
Comes down from the mountains and through the vale,
It kisses the flowers that lie at rest;
It shakes from the grass its glittering mail;
Then hurriedly follows the twilight gray,
Going over the hills and far away.

And if it should meet with a maiden fair,
As lightly over the meadow she trips,
It tangles itself in her long brown hair,
It snatches a kiss from her rosy lips;
Then, suddenly ceasing its amorous play,
It goes over the hills and far away.

From the pleasant fields where the waving grass
Falls low to the sweep of the mower's scythe,
Where the rustic lover and buxom lass
Follow the mowers all merry and blithe,
It gathers the scents of the new-mown hay,
And goes over the hills and far away.

Almost a Tragedy.

BY M. E. W.

DELICIOUS!" The word was the outcome of a long train of thought which, contrary to his ordinary custom, the speaker had been most assiduously following up, and it was uttered in a bright, joyous way that would have carried conviction even to the most sceptical ears.

As it was, the young man constituted his own audience, and, being on excellent terms with himself, he followed up the exclamation with a laugh, and again ejaculated "Delicious!"

Valentine Curzon was a prepossessing young fellow, handsome and debonair, with a pair of gray eyes which had the somewhat dangerous faculty of expressing more than he meant, and a trim little moustache which constant twirling had brought to a superfine point.

He would have been altogether rather an effeminate specimen of early manhood had it not been for his deeply-bronzed complexion and the slight sword-cut across one cheek, which proved him to be something more than a mere butterfly; for Val had been through the Zulu War as a special correspondent to the *Telephone*, and he had reached England only that morning.

The Bond Street rooms from which he was surveying the limited world before him were not his at all, but belonged to a certain Algernon Delahoyde, whose arrival Val was now impatiently awaiting.

At last it began to dawn upon him that the afternoon was waning, and that he had better leave a note for Delahoyde and depart; but, before he had time to hunt up paper and pencil, the door opened and an enormous bull-dog rushed into the room, dragging after him a little man who dropped exhausted into the nearest chair. It was the missing Delahoyde.

"Snakes! My dear old fellow!"

"Why, Val, old man!"

Algernon Delahoyde (Etonised "Snakes" dropped the dog-chain with a clatter and sprang to his feet.

"My dear boy, I am delighted to see you back! When did you arrive? Why didn't you wire me?" he asked in a breath, working Val's arm like a pump-handle.

"Thanks. But don't quite wrench my arm off," responded Val, extricating himself from the other's grasp.

He was glad to see his friend; but his thoughts were too full of a certain soft-voiced Dorothy for him to endure any delay in going to her, and he now wished he had gone direct to the little house on Lavender Hill. "It is awfully jolly to see you again," he added; "but you mustn't mind my running off. I have a call to make, and it is getting late."

"Oh, rubbish!" exclaimed the other. "Don't you think it! You are going to have a drink and a smoke with me first, and give an account of yourself."

"I must go," Val declared. "I came here first only because I promised I would as soon as I landed."

"Refusing a drink! Refusing a smoke! Never knew you do it before!" said his host, with a look of mock incredulity. "Val, what's your engagement?"

The other's laugh sounded rather a conscious one.

"It is not a regular engagement—yet," he replied. "I want to make it one."

"Girl?" inquired Delahoyde, with his head on one side like an inquisitive magpie.

"Of course it is a girl," said Val; "what should it be?"

The little man shook his head mournfully.

"Don't waste your words on me," he said. "Valentine Curzon, you have a friend's permission. Take it. Slope!"

Val hesitated.

"Look here, Snakes—you know the man—a fellow named Bright, whom I met at the last Derby—my last Derby, I mean—the stout man with reddish hair who gave me a lift back to town."

"That fat party I thought was your bootmaker? Well?"

"Yes," said Val, "that's the man. But you might have seen him since; have you?"

"I might," replied Snakes; "but I haven't. Is our fat friend your divinity's father?"

"Yes," answered Val again; and Snakes winked solemnly at him.

"Val," said he, "you're a humbug! You are trying to find out if Miss Bright is married, and you won't ask, because it will be a confession that you have not heard from her!"

Val laughed, and nodded.

"You're no fool. I congratulate you," said he.

Delahoyde bowed.

"I don't know anything positively, but I am sure it is all right," he said. "Mr. Bright is poor—well, poorish, Val—isn't he?"

"Yes; he is that way inclined," responded Val.

"And he is a snob? Why, here am I cheering you up, and you are not grateful!"

"Pretty cheering!" said Val sulkily. "I ask you if it is likely that a girl will wait two years for a fellow who has no claim on her, and you tell me her father is a snob."

"You never asked me anything of the kind," retorted his friend. "Come, Val, don't be ridiculous—there's a good fellow! Of course the girl has waited for you. You always were a lucky beggar. You are handsome, tolerably rich, have splendid prospects——. Why, hang it all, man, go in and win! Don't stand palavering here!" He pushed him through the doorway into the passage. "Good-bye for the present," he added; and, with a nod of thanks, Val Curzon hailed a passing hansom and gave the address—"Rose Neath, Lavender Hill."

When, after his long drive, he reached the house, he handed double fare to the cabman and hurried up the narrow gravel path.

How dismal and solemn the house looked! But of course the blinds were down only for the sun; and, with renewed courage, he gave a pealing ring to the bell, and finished his knock with the soft double rap which in old days would have brought Dorothy flying to meet him.

The door was opened; but there was no Dorothy—no one but an old woman with tattered apron and dirty cap, evidently "the person in charge."

"Is there any one at home?" asked Val, hoping against hope.

"No, there ain't," replied the woman surlily; "and I dunno when they'll be back, and I dunno where they've gone."

She was about to shut the door again, when a coin that Val slipped into her hand helped to quicken her memory, and she condescended to inform him that Miss Julia and her "pa" were at Margate.

"Yes, yes!" cried Val hastily. "But Miss Dorothy—where is she?"

"Lor', sir, she is gone!" replied the woman, with a prolonged stare.

"Is she—dead?" he asked hoarsely.

"Dead!" The woman's harsh laugh rang out on the still evening air. "Lor' bless you, no, sir!" she answered. "Why, Miss Dorothy is married!"

* * * * * *

On the same day and at the same hour two girls were together in a cosy little room in a large house in Regent's Park.

The one, with pale drawn face and haggard eyes, was nervously pacing the room; the other, placid and serene, with smiling lips and dainty gestures, was arranging some china at a side-table.

They were twin-sisters, Dorothy and Julia, whose friendship in the old days had been so much to Val Curzon.

In feature the twins were much alike, for both had long-lashed blue eyes, vividly red lips, and short wavy hair; but here the resemblance ended, for the despairing sadness that lay in Dorothy's eyes was in Julia's replaced by a sparkle that flashed its radiance all over her face.

The difference between them was the more marked by their dresses; for, while Julia wore one of the white gowns that had seen much service in the old days at home, Dorothy was clad in a heavy white silk, from the laces of which her wedding diamonds flashed and sparkled, for she and her husband were going to the Opera that night—and what could be too beautiful or too costly for Tom Maxwell's wife?

Julia was humming contentedly to herself, when a heavy sigh from her sister made her turn round with an impatient contraction of her pretty brows.

"Whatever are you sighing for, Dorothy?" she asked.

There was no answer, but a second sigh longer and more weary than the first. Julia crossed the room, seized her by the arms, brought her to a stand-still by an easy-chair, and forced her into it.

"Sit down," said she, "and listen to me. You are miserable and you are ill, and I am awfully fond of you; yet I should enjoy nothing so much as to give you the severest shaking you ever had in your life!"

"Why?" asked Dorothy feebly. She thought her sister the most stony-hearted of mortals, for when, after a decidedly commonplace existence, she was at last enjoying the luxury of posing as a martyr, it really was trying to find Julia unwilling to sympathize with her.

"I am sure I have enough to make me miserable," she went on fretfully. "You know why I married Tom—for the perfect sympathy that I believed to exist between us; and now, only two months after our marriage, I find I was mistaken, and of course I am very miserable!" Her words ended in a sob, and she turned to cling to her sister, while her beautiful eyes filled with tears.

"Come, darling," said Julia, "don't cry; and don't imagine such a wicked story as to think I do not care when you are in trouble." She emphasized her words with a little kiss on the top of her sister's head, and went on,—

"Now let us suppose we are two books——. By-the-bye, if we were two books," she interrupted herself to suggest, "I suppose you would be a volume of poems and I a cookery-book? But this is frivolous! I repeat that we will suppose we are two books, and then we can review our lives properly, and see how we stand at the present time—shall we?"

"Yes," said Dorothy; "go on."

"Now, dear, to begin. From six years old to twenty we were all alone with our father in that horrid little house on Lavender Hill; and we hated it very much, didn't we?"

"Very much," replied Dorothy, with conviction.

"That's right!" said Julia, with another kiss. "Well, we agree that we were both very wretched. We were wretched, first, because we were poor, and wanted pretty gowns and couldn't have them; we wanted to go everywhere and do everything, and of course we couldn't. And then we were wretched because the money that our poor mother had settled on us for our education only enabled us to see that our father had never been a gentleman, and never would be. All this, I say, was hardly conducive to uproarious jollity. Well, time went on, and we never saw much of anybody. A man who, like our father, was somehow connected with horses—though to this day I don't know if he betted on them or sold them—a man like that was hardly likely to bring gentlefolk home with him; and we did not want the other sort, did we, Dorothy?"

"No," answered the girl dreamily; for she was thinking of one gentleman at least whom they used to see, and very often too.

Julia also evidently remembered him, for in her next sentence she spoke his name.

"Of course," she said meditatively, "there was always Val Curzon."

There was no response, and, struck by a sudden thought, Julia leaned forward and peered into her sister's face; but it had grown too dark for her to distinguish anything, so she again took up the thread of her argument.

"Yes, there was Val Curzon—and he was always a good sort of friend; but then he went abroad, and, as far as we were concerned, that was an end to him."

The bowed head that was resting on her shoulder moved uneasily; but there was no comment, and; with a sudden suspicious tightening of her heart-strings, Julia went on.

"Well, then, Dorothy, you know, Tom Maxwell came, didn't he? And he was very nice, and of course he fell in love with you at once; and then—well, then he asked you to marry him. He said he was old compared with you, and ugly as well, and too much wrapped up in his barrister's work to be fit to pick such a wee white flower—yes, that is what he called you, Dorothy, 'a wee white flower.' And then he asked you to think it over for a week; and you thought and thought, and afterwards we both thought till our heads ached; and you said that you were tired of being poor and never having any fun, and that you would marry; and I said that you did not love him as well as he deserved; and so we agreed to tell him, and he said—poor old Tom!—he said he would chance it."

"Don't say 'poor old Tom' like that!" broke in Dorothy petulantly. "It is I who ought to be pitied, not he. You have been with us a month now, Julia, and you see how I am treated. I thought that, when we were married, I should go everywhere and do everything—be some one, in fact—and lead the life we used to plan in the old garden at home. Instead of that, what happened? What is likely to happen under the plea of what he calls 'important business'?"

She was lashing herself into a passion over her imaginary wrongs, and Julia was too frightened and grieved to interrupt her.

"He calls me beautiful, yet keeps me at home, while our tables are loaded with invitations; he gives me jewels and dresses, yet hardly knows when I wear them; he——"

Her excitement choked her utterance, and in the pause Julia burst in with—

"Dorothy, are you out of your senses? Don't talk like that! Why, you speak as if you had married him for position and—money! You, my sister! Oh, Dorothy!"

Her shocked tone alarmed Dorothy, who had spoken more from petulance and discontent than any deeper feeling, and she attempted to explain her words.

"It is not that," she said somewhat vaguely; "but it might have been so different."

Julia crossed the room, struck a match, and, lighting the lamp, turned to face her sister.

"Dorothy," she said suddenly, "did you ever care for any one else before you married Tom?"

The flush that dyed Dorothy's face was one of pure surprise as she answered—

"No. What do you mean?"

Had Julia been wise, she would have let the matter drop; but, half doubting the answer, she spoke again, this time more pointedly.

"Not for Val Curzon?"

"No," replied Dorothy again. "He was very nice; but he was too friendly to grow fond of in that kind of way."

Her reply was a perfectly truthful one; but Julia, standing facing her, did not believe it. Perhaps it was because her own heart beat the faster at the thought of handsome Val—Val, with his careless good-nature and fascinating ways—perhaps it was this that made her suspicious; but it was certain that in Dorothy's "No" she read an emphatic "Yes."

Meanwhile the bringing of Val's name into the discussion had sent Dorothy's thoughts back to the days when she had first met him.

"I should like to see him again very much," she thought. And it was at that instant that the servant opened the door and announced a visitor.

"Mr. Valentine Curzon!"

"Mr. Curzon!" echoed Dorothy, in glad surprise.

She was hastening towards the door, when Julia caught her arm.

"Wait a moment," she said. "Why, he may not even know you are married; he may think we are here with friends! I shall go to Mr. Curzon and tell him, and you can come in presently."

As usual, Julia had her own way; and, cutting short Dorothy's protestations, she left the room and went to receive Val. He was standing at some distance from the one lamp that was lighted, and consequently was in deep shadow as Julia traversed the great drawing-room and came up to him.

She did not speak, but held out her hand; and, seeing her there, ready to welcome him, in a clinging white gown and with outstretched hands, Val mistook her for the girl for whose greeting he had longed so intensely, and, springing forward, he addressed her by name.

"Dorothy!"

With her soft hands safe in his own strong clasp, it seemed to the poor fellow that the news which the last hour had brought him must be some hideous nightmare from which this was the sweet awakening, and all his old love blended with the new pain in the cry—

"Dorothy! Is it really you, Dorothy?"

"No, Mr. Curzon." Julia's voice was cold and stern as she answered him.

What right had this man to come to her newly-wedded sister and greet her in such tones of piteousness and love? What right had Dorothy to tell her that she had never cared for him, when this was the outcome of a two years' separation?

She snatched her hands from his nervous grasp, and walked to the lighted end of the room, pointing to a chair as she did so. "No, Mr. Curzon," she repeated, "it is not Dorothy. My sister—Mrs. Maxwell—is, I believe, with her husband. Do you wish to speak to her?"

"I—yes—I," began Val, then stopped and bit his lip. "Yes, I wanted to see her, of course," he went on, after a moment's pause. "In fact, you took me quite by surprise, for I was told you were at Margate with Mr. Bright. But it is uncommonly pleasant to see you again, Julia. How are you? How has the world been treating you all this time?"

"It has been treating me very well, Mr. Curzon."

"What have I done?" asked Val quickly.

"Done? How? What do you mean?"

"That you do not call me 'Val.' I come here to see you and Dorothy directly I land, even before I go to my own people; I come to take up our friendship exactly where we were forced to drop it when I went abroad; I call you, as usual, by your name 'Julia,' and you call me in return 'Mr. Curzon'!"

Julia was nonplused, and, while she hesitated, he spoke again.

"Of course I had no right to expect it," he went on sadly—"two years is a long time, and, if a fellow goes away, he must expect to be forgotten; but I had fancied that somehow you and she were different, and that I might find at least two friends who still cared a little for me."

"But we do—we do really!" cried Julia; for his words had moved her. "See now—Val! We are friends still, good friends; but things have happened since we last saw you. You know Dorothy is married?"

Val nodded, and the girl continued—

"So, of course, in talking to her you must say 'Mrs. Maxwell'; but you may call me 'Julia' if you like, and you may call her 'Dorothy' in speaking to me of her. Does that content you?"

"How good you are!" cried Val gratefully. "But you——"

"Welcome back to England!"

Val rose to his feet and turned swiftly. It was Dorothy. She came in, followed by her husband and a couple of servants who were bearing lamps; and never in all her life had she seemed so beautiful as she did this evening to poor Val Curzon's envious gaze.

"Welcome back to England!" she repeated. "We are glad to see you again! Tom"—turning to the big awkward man who had followed her into the room—"this is Mr. Val Curzon. He was a very good friend of ours in the old days."

Val murmured something in answer; and then, while he and Maxwell endeavored to improve their acquaintance by discussing the weather, the two girls sauntered into the conservatory.

"I told Tom who he was, and he said he would ask him to dine with us," Dorothy told Julia, with a little laugh. "Yes, Mr. Curzon?"—as Val came towards them.

"Mr. Maxwell has been so good as to ask me to stay and dine with you," said Val. "Have I your permission to do so in travelling-dress?"

"Surely!" replied Dorothy graciously. "Tom has such an objection to evening-clothes himself that he will be grateful to you."

"He is certainly grateful," put in Maxwell, "for Mr. Curzon can make up for his wife's disappointment, Dorothy dear, I am very sorry, but I can't by any possibility get away in time for the Opera. Do you mind putting it off?"

He hated crossing his young wife's wishes, and rather dreaded her reception of the news; but Dorothy surprised him by submitting with a very good grace.

"Well, we must arrange for another night then. And now to dinner. Will you take me down, Mr. Curzon? Bring in Julia, please, Tom;" and, followed by the other two, she and Val went to the dining-room.

After dinner Dorothy found herself for the first time alone with Val; for, after hurriedly drinking his coffee, Maxwell had gone to the library, taking Julia with him.

"Tom wants so many letters copied now that sometimes Julia acts as his secretary," Dorothy explained. "You remember how beautifully she writes? It is rather rude of them both to leave us; but you do not mind very much, do you?"

Val glanced at her as she concluded; and then he let himself drop lazily into the big chair.

"No," he answered, with a contented little laugh. "I do not mind in the least."

Meanwhile Julia was curious. Was Tom blind or stupid that he should leave those two alone? Was Dorothy merely careless, or worse, that he should grant a *tete-a-tete* to Val Curzon?

It was true that neither husband nor wife had heard Val's cry of "Dorothy!" nor seen him—generally of all men the most self possessed — stammering and abashed before her sister's inquiring eyes; but still could neither of them have had the sense to prevent the interview that was then taking place?

While Tom was busy with his papers, and Julia was uselessly vexing herself, the other two were getting on very comfortably together.

"And so you are really glad to be back in England?" asked Dorothy, when her guest had finished an account of his travels. "But I suppose you find things are very much altered?"

"Yes," replied Val, with a sudden gravity that pointed his words—"things and people."

"I suppose you mean you did not expect to find me married?" she said half defiantly and then, as Val made no reply—"Come," she persisted—"did you?"

"No," Val Curzon answered quietly, "I did not expect it."

The words were nothing; but the tone in which he spoke them was so peculiar that the girl flushed crimson and her breath came faster. For the first time she wondered whether, after all, there might not be something in Julia's half-implied suggestion that Val had cared for her.

She rested her fair cheek on the red-velvet cushion and looked up at him with a laugh. Coquette from the crown of her golden head to the soles of her dainty feet, she could not resist the temptation to prove if Julia were right, and, as Val towered above her with firmly-folded arms, she raised a soft hand and touched him.

"Where are your congratulations then?" she asked. "Why, Mr. Curzon, you must have left your politeness with the Zulus! Do you call this a friendly fashion of wishing me good luck?"

Val turned and faced her. He was strangely pale, and his voice sounded husky as he asked—

"Are we friends then, you and I?"

Dorothy's courage took wings as she looked up into his face and read her answer there. Yes, Val had loved her, did love her! Her random speeches of professed liking for him in the old garden at home came back to her with a terrible distinctness as she realized for the first time that what to her had been merely a pleasant friendship had proved something deeper to Val Curzon. If she had only waited! If she had only known! She raised her hands entreatingly and took his in her clasp—anything to stay the nameless fear that was creeping over her.

"Val, don't look like that—you frighten me! Ah, do not go!"—as he retreated a step. "Don't leave me, for I am so in need of a friend! Will you not be my friend?"

A mist seemed to rise before Val's eyes, and it was only with a supreme effort that he released his hands and stepped back some paces. Once freed from the contact of her soft fingers, his manhood returned to him; and, with a low bow that hid his quivering lips, he was able to answer her.

"Thank you," he said gravely; "if you will let me, I will be your friend."

* * * * * * *

After that evening Val Curzon became a constant visitor at the Maxwells', and some time before the long vacation began was as much at home at the house in Regent's Park as in his own Jermyn Street chambers.

He belonged to the staff of a well-known society journal which gave him plenty of work; and as, amongst other good gifts, Fortune had endowed him with a good musical ear, it became part of his duty to haunt the fashionable concert-rooms and put in a constant appearance at the Opera.

It happened that one of the many topics on which Dorothy and her husband disagreed was that of music, of which she was really very fond, while he as cordially detested it. It was therefore an intense relief to him when he heard of Val's appointment as musical critic.

"Now you can escort my wife," he told him; and when Val, with a weak dread of the torrent he had himself set free, ventured to protest against "inflicting himself" in such a fashion on Mrs. Maxwell, it was only to be met by the assurance that nothing could have fitted in better.

"You know, my dear fellow," said Tom Maxwell confidentially, "it is hard on Dorothy to let her lose her greatest pleasure; and, as for appeasing Mrs. Grundy"—he laughed—"well, as to Mrs. Grundy, Mrs. Stonor can always go with you and play propriety."

Mrs. Stonor was an aunt of his, and had lived with them ever since the day when, on Julia's departure, Dorothy had declared herself unable to act as housekeeper.

The old lady was very deaf, and would make the very laxest of chaperons; but Val, having offered his weak protest against such an arrangement, felt now that he was absolved from any consequences that might ensue, and he looked forward with a fierce pleasure to the evenings he should spend at Dorothy's side.

Even while he felt this pleasure he hated himself for so feeling. He knew that, slowly but surely, day by day, he and Dorothy were drifting nearer to each other. He knew that the delight he felt at meeting her was reflected in the girl's eyes as she raised them in welcome, and he saw that that reflection grew stronger day by day; and yet, though he loathed himself for his weakness, he could not make up his mind to leave her.

As time went on, Dorothy and Tom came to recognize what the clearer-sighted Julia had seen from the first, that they were totally unfitted one for the other; and, ere the autumn found them back from their holiday and reinstated at home, they both felt this strongly, but felt it with a difference.

Tom hid his sorrow silently in his own heart, and sought to bury it away from sight; but Dorothy held her trouble in her open hands, and looked around her for sympathy. Her father? No, he was out of the question. Julia then? No; she would help her, but she would blame as well.

So no one was left her but Val; and to Val she took her trouble—shyly, of course, at first, and more by implication and suggestion than by spoken words; but, with all-too-ready sympathy, Val Curzon understood.

"No one understands me as you do," she said to him gratefully, the first time he ventured on a word of sympathy; and from that time the understanding between them grew fuller and more complete, and, before Christmas brought Julia again into their midst, Val had dropped the miserable pretence of friendship and had told Dorothy he loved her.

"I would never have told you this," he had said, fully believing his own false words, "had I found you the happy woman you ought to be. I would have gone away again and left you, and you would never have guessed; but now—now—— What are you? Who is your husband? A man who had no more right to win you than your father had to sell you to him! A man by whom your sympathies, your tastes, your very words, are misunderstood! Isn't it so, Dorothy? I ask you, is it not so?"

And Dorothy had answered "Yes."

All this had taken place when the Maxwells were in Scotland during the long vacation, and Val Curzon had formed one of their large house-party.

He had left them the next day, and ever since had abstained from calling at their London house. Culpably weak and treacherous as he had been, he was not base enough to accept the hospitality of the unsuspecting man whom he had wronged so deeply; and from that time he and Maxwell met only occasionally.

Val, for his part, found it an immense relief, for, when they were together, blinded and prejudiced as he was, he could not help seeing that Dorothy's husband had a good deal to bear with at times, and the knowledge of this fretted him not a little. If he could only have honestly believed him to be the heartless husband he tried so hard to think him, his own actions would have seemed less black and his conscience been less accusing; but, as it was, it was far easier to quiet the cries of his outraged honor when he no longer met Tom Maxwell, and saw him only through Dorothy's eyes.

So they met, these two, now at a ball, now at a concert, and learned gradually to balance the wretched, miserable lives they were leading against the few mad moments of happiness which a casual meeting brought them, learned to stifle the calls of conscience learned to drift idly on the stream of their own weakness; and so the time passed on, and with Christmas came Julia.

With her coming a brighter, sunnier atmosphere came also, and a healthier tone crept into the sombre house, and all but her sister rejoiced at her advent. But to Dorothy it was a serious drawback.

When Tom told the new-comer, in answer to her inquiries for Mr. Curzon, that they had almost lost sight of him, and that it was only occasionally that Dorothy came across him, how could she take Julia with her to the Barrows' dance that evening, where she knew she should meet Val—knew that he would come eagerly to her and claim his promised valses?

By so doing Julia's old suspicions would be aroused, and then—— Dorothy dared not carry her fears any farther, and in all haste she sat down and wrote hurriedly to Val.

When the note had been despatched, she felt more at her ease, and, by the time she, Julia, and Mrs. Stonor had forced their way through the mob on the Barrows' staircase, she was more like her old self again than her sister had yet seen her.

She made a model chaperon, for she refused all dances for herself until she saw Julia's card filled with initials to the very last line, and then she graciously changed her mind and made some dozen men the envy of their less lucky comrades.

Julia's first partner was Val Curzon.

"I did not expect to see you here," she began, with the frank betrayal of her thoughts which was her chief charm. "Tom told me they had almost lost sight of you, so I thought you must have left London again."

"Oh, no! Why should I?" asked Val awkwardly. "But shall we start?"—and, with the usual preliminary lurch, they joined the dancers.

After a few turns, it was borne in upon Julia that she was hardly enjoying this valse as much as she had anticipated, for Val was so changed as to be hardly Val at all.

The old bright charm of voice and manner had flown together with the quick laugh and repartee, and in place of the merry silver-tongued Val of past days was a moody taciturn man who muttered inanities in response to her friendly questions, and altogether comported himself like the ghost of his old light-hearted self.

Julia was grievously disappointed, and she gave a little sigh of satisfaction as the valse came to an end. Curtly refusing his rather lukewarm request for the honor of a second dance, Julia left him, and was speedily taken possession of by her next partner.

It was Algernon Delahoyde, and they met with mutual pleasure. Julia found him quite a relief after Val Curzon in his present mood, and she beamed upon the little man, who rose nobly to the occasion and proved himself an amusing companion.

When the dance was over, he begged Julia to go down with him to the supper-room; but the girl refused, declaring that she would not risk the crowd on the staircase.

Would she sit then in the conservatory, and let him bring up something to her? Yes, she would; so he installed her in a quiet nook in the conservatory and departed on his errand.

Julia leaned back, very much at her ease. She had not wished to be found by any other partner; so, by moving a shrub or two, Delahoyde had completely hidden her from view, and, the place being in semi-obscurity, Julia derived a wicked pleasure from the passing scraps of conversation she overheard.

"I tell you, Bob," said one man to another, as they strolled by arm-in-arm, "that those fowls in the supper-room are the identical beggars I saw last week at the Cooksons'! I carved my initials on the drumsticks, and this is the third time I've met them this week."

As they passed on Julia nearly betrayed her presence by a titter. Peeping through her leafy screen, she saw two other men approaching. They halted close to her.

"Well," said one, "are you dubious as to winning your bet?"

"Not I," returned his friend, with a half-laugh. "I tell you, at the rate they are going, she will leave her husband before the month is out."

"And go off with the other fellow—eh?"

"Oh, of course! Those fluffy-headed women are always fools, and——"

"Hush!" interrupted the other. "Here they come. Let us take compassion on them and clear out." And they moved away, leaving Julia with burning cheeks and flashing eyes.

How could any one be so fearfully, so awfully wicked as to make bets as to whether or no a woman would run away with somebody else? It seemed to her too monstrous a thing to be credited.

"Heaven help her and keep her!" prayed the girl, with sudden fervor. "Why, it might have been I or Dorothy! My dear little sister! Thank Heaven, she is happy and loved!" Then, remembering that this other woman and her lover were said to be approaching, she parted the leaves and leaned forward eagerly.

It was so dark that she could only see that a man and a woman were sauntering towards her, without being able to distinguish their features; but even in the distance something in the man's walk struck her as strangely familiar.

As they passed under a lantern, he raised his head, and the light fell full on his upturned face—fell too on the white-robed girl who was clinging to him with a world of love in her beautiful eyes. Julia shut her own eyes for a moment, as if to break the spell, and then she looked steadily at them again.

It was the woman whose name was on every one's lips—her sister Dorothy—and the man was Val Curzon!

Julia sat as though paralyzed, unable to move or speak, powerless even to think. She saw that they came slowly towards her and sat down on a lounge almost at her side; she heard Val's passionate answer to Dorothy's murmured "I thought I should never be able to speak to you;" and then she knew, but knew in a vague indistinct fashion, as though the knowledge concerned some one else and not her, that what those other men had spoken of was true, and that Dorothy and Val were more than friends—were lovers!

"Val," Dorothy was saying wistfully, when their whispered words grew to have a meaning for her, "you had my note?"

"Yes, dear."

"And you were not angry, were you, that I had to tell you not to dance with me to-night?"

"Angry with you?" Val's voice trembled. "Don't you believe me, Dorothy, when I tell you that that is the one feeling you can never rouse in me? You can make me happy, miserable, mad; but you can never make me angry."

"Are you quite sure?"

She asked the question with a laugh, resting her cheek on the red velvet and raising her face towards him. Her attitude reminded Val of the first evening in Regent's Park, when she had sat in just such a fashion, and, raising her eyes to his, had begged him to be her friend. Friend! And this was what it had come to!

If she could only get away unseen! That was Julia's one thought. Could she not escape, and so go to the head of the staircase to meet and stop Delahoyde on his return? Yes, there was a second door which she had not previously noticed, and her dress, being of a soft material, would not betray her by its rustling.

Still keeping her eyes on those two, still listening to Dorothy's confidences respecting the uncongenial home atmosphere, Julia accomplished a noiseless retreat. Once in the corridor outside, she made her way to the ball-room, and there was fortunate enough to encounter a small Etonian, the son of her hostess, and her own most devoted adnirer.

"Why, there you are, Freddy! I was just looking for you," she told him. "Will you take me to the stairs? I am so warm here."

Freddy was delighted.

"I'm the man to come to if you want to get through a crowd," he assured her, with a fine contempt for his mother's guests. "All you have to do is to stick tight, and I'll wriggle you through."

His method of so doing was hardly one to be admired; but it had the merit of succeeding, and Julia was in time to catch Delahoyde as he came up the stairs, full of apologies for his lengthy absence.

"There is such a crowd down below that one can hardly move," he said ruefully, "so I could only get some coffee. Will that do?"

"Beautifully, thank you," replied Julia, who was now all anxiety to get rid of Freddy.

That young gentleman, however, settled the matter by politely exclaiming—

"Well, you are a muff! Coffee be hanged, when there are cherry-ices going! Look here, Miss Bright; shall I get you an ice?"—and, gratified by Julia's assurance that an ice was the one thing for which she longed, off he went.

"Mr. Delahoyde," began Julia, as the boy disappeared, "I want you to do me a great kindness; will you?"

"Only too charmed," began the young fellow, in orthodox fashion; but, after a second glance, he understood that Julia was in earnest, and, with a change of voice, he added, "You know how glad I am to do anything for you. What is it?"

"I—I am not well," answered Julia, "and, unless I go home, I shall faint, or something. Will you go to the conservatory and find my sister, and ask her if she would mind coming home now? Go in at the big door, and go very noisily—will you, please?—or—or you will frighten her approaching her in the dark. Freddy will take me to the carriage as soon as he comes back; and I fancy Mrs. Stonor is somewhere near the door." She stopped as she read a pitying comprehension in the young man's eyes; and then, with a quivering lip, she added, "Do not tell anybody I asked you this, will you Mr. Delahoyde? It seems like making a fuss; and I dare say I shall be all right soon."

"I shall not tell anybody, because I shall not remember it;" and then, with a gentle hand-clasp, he left her.

A moment later one of her ex-partners presented himself, asking if he might see her to the carriage, as Delahoyde had said she was leaving; and this arrangement enabled her to send Freddy after Mrs. Stonor, when they met the boy on the stairs. A few minutes afterwards the Maxwells' brougham was rolling towards home, with Dorothy lying back in her corner, silent and pale.

* * * * * *

It was the night after the Barrows' dance, and Val Curzon was alone in his Jermyn Street chambers. On the table stood a couple of portmanteaus ready packed, and the room had a bare untidy appearance that seemed to tell of the speedy departure of its occupants.

At the table sat Val, and, as a neighboring clock struck nine, he pushed back his chair and ran his eyes hurriedly over the letter that he had just completed. It was to the editor of the paper on the staff of which he had been serving, and contained the bare information that unforeseen circumstances obliged him to leave town directly, and that he would write to him from abroad. Scarcely was it sealed and directed when a knock came at the room door, and in another minute a girl advanced swiftly into the room, clad in a long cloak which completely covered her.

It was Dorothy.

Val took the little bag she was holding, and, putting it on the table, led her to an easy-chair by the fire. There were no vows, no protestations. He was afraid of frightening her, afraid of starting the tears that trembled under the white lids; so he only praised her punctuality, and chafed the little cold hands she raised so piteously to him.

His presence always brought her courage, and in a little time her face grew less pale and her voice lost its tremor; and then he told her of his plans. They would start in half an hour, and Mary would meet them at the station.

Mary was the rosy-cheeked maid who had lived at Rose Neath, and whose goodwill had so often been of assistance to Val. He had found her out again, and she was to be Dorothy's maid, and cross with them to Paris, and never leave her mistress until—Val's voice sank to a whisper—"until the law will let me claim my own, my darling," was how he finished his sentence.

Then he talked on in a livelier strain, for he dared not leave her to her own thoughts. He told her of how he would take a yacht, and how they two would chase the sunshine round the world, and make their lives one long summer holiday; and so on, till Dorothy's sweet laugh rose in answer and her eyes sparkled as they met his own.

Hark! Some one was knocking at the room door; and, with a faint cry, Dorothy rose to her feet.

"Go in there," said Val quickly, but gently. "It is only the servant; I will get rid of her, and then we will go." He opened the door of the inner room, and gently pushed Dorothy in. Then, locking the door and pocketing the key, "Come in!" he called savagely. "What the deuce do you want to come worrying here for? Did I—— Julia?"

Standing just as he had turned in his anger, the name broke from Val's colorless lips in a hoarse cry that rang through the room, as Julia Bright came swiftly towards him and the door behind her swung to heavily. She was curiously pale, and her eyes were glittering strangely as she glanced around her, and then, with clasped hands, stood confronting him.

"Where is Dorothy? Where is my sister?"

Val's answer was prompt.

"My dear Miss Bright, what do you mean? Isn't she at home?"

"No, she is here!" cried the girl passionately. "Dorothy, where are you? Do you not hear me?"

Her excitement was so great that her voice rose shrilly; and Val Curzon caught her wrists in his strong grasp and forced her into the chair at her side.

"Be quiet!" he hissed. "You do not know who may hear you.

"And I do not care! I must find her. She must come home, I tell you, for Tom is coming here!"

"Tom!"

"Yes," went on the girl breathlessly, her words coming as fast as she could utter them. "He knows all about it—I don't know how. He is coming here. He asked Mrs. Stonor for your address—she didn't know it. She told him to go to Algie Delahoyde's and find it there; and I heard, and I came here first. I could not find Dorothy at home, and I feared she had come here to see you. Ah!"—as she caught sight of the portmanteaus and their meaning flashed upon her. "Val, were you going to take her away?"

"Yes! And, by Heaven, I will!"

There was a long pause, broken only by the rumble of cabs in the street below, and then Val Curzon spoke again.

"Go home, Julia," he urged quietly. "It has gone too far for us to go back. Her happiness, her whole future life, depends upon me, and you shall not make me fail her. Go away; go now before he comes, and let me go. Her honor is safe—I swear it by the Heaven who gave her heart to me—and——"

Hark! Tramp, tramp! A heavy footstep was coming up the stairs. Once more there was a dead silence. To the terror-stricken woman in the inner room those moments seemed hours as her husband drew nearer and nearer, and the pale face pressed against the door grew ashen as she heard Val's muttered curse and pictured her sister's agony. Nearer, nearer came the sound.

Suddenly Julia started, dragged herself to Val's feet—had an empire depended on it at that moment, she would have been powerless to stand upright—and, kneeling by him whispered something that sent the blood rushing to his face.

"Yes," was all he said; but, when Tom Maxwell softly opened the door and peered jealously into the room, he saw Val Curzon holding Julia closely in his arms and raining kisses on her upturned face.

Julia—Julia! So this was the outcome of the last two hours' agony—this was what he saw, when, goaded by the suspicions forced upon him by an officious friend, he had rushed round to Val Curzon's rooms!

In the relief of the moment he almost laughed aloud; but, with a sudden recollection that it was Julia at whom he was looking, his face quickly clouded again. Ten o'clock, and in this man's chambers! Why, what was she doing? He glanced at the portmanteaus; and then, as Julia had done, he drew his own conclusions. In another moment Tom Maxwell had advanced into the room and laid a heavy hand on the girl's arm.

"Julia, what are you doing here?"

Val Curzon started back; but Julia turned and faced the new-comer.

"Why, Tom, what a nuisance you are! I did not want you to know."

Maxwell was taken aback. The expression of the girl's face was ruelul; but a laugh was in her eyes, and before their frank happy look his doubts took flight as he grasped the hand she held towards him.

"What are you doing here?" he repeated, but less sternly than before.

"Saying good-bye to Val," answered Julia shamefacedly. "Look here, Val"—leaving the elder man, and crossing to Curzon's side. "Excuse me a moment, Tom—I want to whisper. Listen!" she whispered in Val's ear. "Back me up; declare you love me! So I may tell him?" Then she added aloud, "Now, Tom, sit down and listen to me. You did not know that Mr. Curzon and I were——"

"Engaged," struck in Val. "Now did you, Maxwell?"

The way in which he was able to speak surprised himself; but Julia's pluck and invention roused him from his apathy. He knew the battle she was fighting was for Dorothy's sake; he recognised with what fearful self-sacrifice she was determined to win it; and, with a sudden glow of admiration such as he had never felt for Dorothy, he caught the infection of the girl's courage, and rose bravely in his turn. Tom Maxwell stared in amazement.

"You are engaged—you two?" he said at last. "But why was I not told? Why was it kept a secret?"

"Ah, why indeed?" asked Julia comically. "My dear Tom, what is the reason of half the secrets? Why, want of money, to be sure! Papa does not know we are engaged; he would deny it if you asked him."

"Yes; don't you see?" went on Val, seating himself on the arm of Julia's chair. "It is you I have to thank as an obstacle to our marriage. Now Dorothy has made such a swell match, Mr. Bright expects her sister to go and do likewise; and I am too poor a beggar to stand any chance."

"But, my dear fellow," returned the other, who in very thankfulness could have cried aloud, "why didn't you apply to me? I might have been of some use."

"No, thank you," broke in Julia, as Val glanced at her helplessly—"he could not borrow money; and, as for telling you—oh, most proper of brothers!—knowing that papa would object, is it likely you would have let me come here?"

"Certainly not?" answered Maxwell, with a smile. "But you are a dreadful child to come here alone, even if he is going away. Where are you off to, Curzon?"

"Paris," replied Julia promptly—it was the first foreign place she thought of. "He has some writing work out there, and—— Why, Tom, what are you laughing at?"

"Because—— Ha, ha! It is too ridiculous! Curzon, I must tell you; I came round here intending to half kill you!"

"Me?" questioned Val, with a twitching lip. "Why?"

"Some old fool came round after dinner," pursued Maxwell, "and hinted that you and Dorothy were better friends than I suspected. I rushed round here to ask you what you meant by causing my wife to be talked about, and found—ha, ha!—you and Julia!"

"Hist—be quiet! Dorothy will hear you."

"Why, Julia, is Dorothy here?"

"Of course she is!" went on the girl coolly. "You don't suppose she would let me come alone? She is in the inner room, no come alone? She is in the inner room, and—— Why, the door is locked!"

"Here—here is the key," said Val, producing it.

Maxwell was flushing like a girl.

"Wait a moment," he requested. "Curzon, are your walls thick? She may have heard me."

"No," avowed Julia, with a laugh, "I know she can't hear, because I have tried them! Now, Dorothy dear, come out, for Tom is here. My poor little sister, you are as pale as a ghost; and how cold you are!"

"Of course I am cold," answered Dorothy. "That room is like an ice-house."

"Poor little thing!" said her husband tenderly; and Julia rattled on, asking Val if it was not time to start.

"Yes," replied Val feebly, "I suppose I must go."

"Yes, and at once," said Julia impressively. "Say good-bye."

And Val Curzon said good-bye. Just for a moment he held Dorothy's cold hand in his, just for a moment he looked into her pitcous eyes, and then he turned and left her.

Julia followed him out into the passage, shutting the door behind her.

"Mr. Curzon!" she said faintly.

Val, who was in front, turned swiftly. The girl was pale and panting, leaning against the wall, with both hands pressed to her heart.

"You are ill—you are fainting!" cried Val.

Julia waved him back impatiently.

"Do not touch me," she said. "Listen a moment, and then go." She paused, and then continued, "You will write to me from abroad, once, twice, directing your letters to me under cover to Tom Maxwell. After a little, you will cease to write, and I will tell them"—again she was forced to pause—"that we have broken off our—engagement. You will not write to Dorothy."

"No," said Val Curzon.

"I say you will not, because I shall be there to prevent her receiving any letter if you do send it. Now go."

Val Curzon, standing on the step below her, raised his eyes to the girl who had saved him in spite of himself and something in the silent appeal touched Julia and reminded her of the days when this man had been so much to her. Her face suddenly softened, and she held out her hand.

"I shall hear of you in the future," she said gently. "Pray Heaven it may be as a better man!"

Val took her hand silently, and then went slowly down the stairs, her last words still ringing in his ears.

* * * * * *

Six years have passed since that night, and the name of Julia Bright is lost in the more dignified appellation of Mrs. Algernon Delahoyde. She is as bright and bewitching and apparently as nonchalant as ever. Her two boys vie with their father in their love for "mamma," and Tom Maxwell's little motherless daughter almost lives with "pretty auntie."

Julia knows—and it is her happiest memory—that in those few months between Val's departure and Dorothy's death she and her husband were drawn very close together; she knows that Tom recognized at last that he owed more to his pretty wife than the mere protection of his name, and she knows how he left his work and wooed his wife over again in the sunny lands to which her failing health drove them. "It is better so," was the thought with which she kissed her when dead; and gradually the pain of all that sad time was merged into a peaceful memory.

Of Val Curzon she still hears from time to time. He has never married, and never will marry—she is certain of that; but his books are beginning to be known, and over one of them Julia has shed happy thankful tears.

It is the work of a man who has suffered, and on whom suffering has left its bitter traces; but it is also the work of a man who has conquered. The writing is pure, ennobling and good, and the dedication is this—"To the woman who worked me good."

The Delahoydes never speak of this book. Even when they hear it praised or discussed they never mention the author's name; but, on their first reading it, Algernon Delahoyde looked full into his wife's shining eyes, and there read the name of the woman to whom Val Curzon had dedicated his book, the book which brings back the memory of that Christmastide six years ago, when she played so prominent a part in the life-drama that was almost a tragedy.

THE LENGTH OF DAYS.—At London and Bremen, Germany, the longest day has sixteen and a half hours. At Stockholm in Sweden, the longest day also has sixteen and a half hours. At Hamburg in Germany, and Dantzic in Prussia, the longest day has seventeen hours, and the shortest seven hours. At St. Petersburg, Russia, and Tobolsk, Siberia, the longest day has nineteen hours, and the shortest five. At Tornea in Finland, the longest day has twenty-one hours and a half. At Wardhuys in Norway, the day lasts from the 21st of May to the 22nd of July, without interruption; and at Spitzbergen, the longest day is three and a half months. At New York the longest day, June, 21st, has fourteen hours and fifty-six minutes; at Montreal, fifteen and a half hours; but the longest day of all, although one never seen by a civilised person, is that at the two Poles, where the daylight lasts for six months at a time, and is succeeded by a night equally long.

LITTLE BOY: "Please, I want the doctor to come and see mother." Servant: "How, he's out. Where do you come from?" Little boy: "What, don't you know me? Why, we deal with you! We had a baby from here last week!"

AT HOME AND ABROAD.

An eminent French scientist proves almost conclusively that the tendency of European cholera epidemics is to become less and less fatal as they recur. He points out that, whereas in Paris, for instance, the disease carried off 18,402 persons in 1832, and 19,184 in 1849, it was fatal in but 7,626 cases in 1853-4; in only 5,751 in 1865-6, and in no more than 864 in 1873. The statistics of other large cities show similar general results; and there is, therefore, great reason to hope that science and improved sanitation will eventually render civilized countries proof against cholera epidemics, and that, in years to come, the scourge will cease to be a terror to Western Europe.

Although Scotia now means Scotland, it once meant Ireland. Ireland was known to the Greeks as Juvcona, about two centuries before the birth of Christ. Cæsar calls it Hibernia, as does Ptolemy in the map he has given of the island. It is said that the Phœnicians first gave Ireland the name of Hiberna, meaning thereby, "utmost, or last habitation," for beyond that land, westward, the Phœnicians never extended their voyages. Towards the decline of the Roman empire the country began to be called Scotia, a name retained by the monastic writers till the eleventh century, when the name Scotia having passed to modern Scotland, the ancient name of Hibernia began to be again used.

An English paper makes a very sensible suggestion with reference to those gloomy places called railway waiting-rooms. In similar places in France, the walls are often adorned with well-executed maps in relief, showing the country through which the line passes. Why should not this custom be adopted in Britain? Constant travellers know to their cost that there are many railway stations in the kingdom where waiting-rooms are only too necessary. The cry of "all change here!" often means that all will be compelled to wait here for an indefinate period. Now, if waiting-rooms were furnished with maps and framed notices giving some account of the history of the surrounding neighborhood, its antiquities, natural beauties, etc., the dreary time might in many cases be turned into a pleasant visit, and would most infallibly do good as an advertisement to the railway itself.

At the Berlin Fisheries Exhibition in 1880, a German inventor showed a lamp which, lowered into the sea, and fed by air from the surface, was to be so arranged as to attract fish into a net prepared for their reception. The idea has now been adopted and improved upon by the United States Fisheries Commission, which has ordered the construction of an experimental apparatus upon the following plan: An Edison incandescent lamp of sixteen-candle power will be placed within a glass globe of sufficient strength to withstand the pressure of water at great depths, and suspended immediately above a deep net shaped like an inverted cone, and having a mouth ten feet in diameter. The lamp and net will be capable of being lowered into the sea and very rapidly raised by means of a windlass, and it is expected that the fish, attracted by the light, will be caught and hauled up in such numbers that the old method of fishing will speedily become obsolete.

Recent triumphs of medicine and surgery are of so surprising a nature as to suggest that in the future we shall be able to accomplish something very much like raising the dead to life. Dr. W. B. Richardson tells us that frogs, which have been poisoned by nitrate of amyl, have been restored after nine days of apparent death: and that in one case putrefactive changes had actually commenced. He also informs us that, by continuing artificial circulation with artificial respiration, a dog was revived one hour and five minutes after it had been apparently killed by an overdose of chloroform. The heart in this instance was not only still, but cold, and rapidly becoming rigid; and death, in the ordinary sense of the word, had really taken place. If such results can be obtained with animals, we may surely hope for the successful application of similar treatment to human beings.

It is a common practice amongst small boys, all the world over, to fill their pockets, and especially their trousers pockets, with an extraordinary collection of miscellaneous articles, among which may often be found a top, several pieces of string, some fragments of cake or biscuits, a thick mass of sweets, a knife, a few foreign stamps and coins, a very dirty handkerchief, some percussion caps, one or two loose shot, and the bitten remains of a cedar pencil. A lad who recently died under mysterious circumstances in Washington, would have done well if he had confined himself to putting his treasures in his pockets. Many of them, unfortunately, he swallowed, doubtless by accident; and when the surgeons examined his body, they were surprised to discover in his stomach twenty large plum stones, a copper cent, a nickel five-cent piece, a twenty-lira piece, and many other foreign coins, including some strange pips that had begun to sprout.

POEMS AND RICH were names that directly followed each other in the death notices published in Boston papers lately

Our Young Folks.

DOLLY'S PARTY.

BY HENRY FRITH.

UPSTAIRS in the nursery of a house not many miles from the city, there lived once upon a time a doll—a beautiful, fair-haired, blue-eyed dolly, like a little girl I know by the seaside.

This doll had everything she wanted. She had a kind little "mamma," whose name was Kathleen; and an aunt whose name was Queenie. She had a house of her own, and a nice bed, plenty of dresses, and plates and dishes.

So one evening she thought she would like to have a party, and when the children were all asleep, Miss Dolly, who had been sitting up with her eyes wide open ever since nurse had tidied up the nursery, peeped into the great toy-box which stood in the corner of the room. Yes, it is there still, and in it were then a number of toys, all very precious to the children.

A soldier, with a tall black cap and a very red coat, was sleeping quietly side by side with a great ball and Mr. Noah, who had somehow lost the last ark and had to sleep in the box.

Dolly could not see any more, but she squeaked a little, as dollies will at times, and the soldier looked at her.

"A happy New Year to you, miss," he said. (Toys are said to be able to talk when the new year is coming in, but some people never hear them.) "A happy New Year, Dolly."

"I wish you the same," she replied politely. "Do you think you could come out of the box? I want to speak to you."

"I will try," said the red-coated soldier. "The fairies may help me. Cheer up Noah," he cried, "it's New Year's Eve. Come, get up."

"Yes, get up! Gee up!" exclaimed a loud voice from another corner.

Dolly turned around, and then got on her feet. There was the rocking-horse bowing so gracefully, and moving up and down. "Gee up!" it said. "It's time to get up. Twelve o'clock."

Then the clock struck twelve, and neither you, nor I, nor any one else ever saw such fun as took place in that nursery. There was quite a party formed at once.

The tongs seized the shovel around the waist and danced about; the poker handed out a sand-spade from the press; the chairs walked off two and two, and an easy chair offered one arm to Dolly, and the other to the Soldier.

A musical box began to play a march. Up jumped Noah, while his wife, with Shem, Ham, Japhet, and their wives, and all the animals, came by twos and threes.

"Now for some fun," exclaimed Dolly, as she brought out her dishes and plates, on which a nice supper was already fixed. "Come and have something to eat, and afterwards I will tell you a story, on condition that each one of you tell me one."

"I will," said the Soldier, "with pleasure."

"So will I," added the Rocking-Horse; "I will do anything a lady bids me."

The Kettle said it would sing a song after supper, if that would do. The Sand-spade was also quite willing to tell a tale of the seas de, if it would not be considered below his dignity to repeat what it had heard; and a box of bricks, which lived in a corner of the cupboard, asked to help. A puzzle offered to put itself together to amuse the company, and a horse and cart, a big dog, and a "Punch" said they could also tell tales.

Then they began supper. Such a supper it was! The clock ran down to see it, and chimed in beautifully with the musical box for awhile.

The two bears got off the mantel-piece; the candles beamed with delight; the fire crackled and roared up to the chimney, winking at the walls where the pictures of "Red Riding Hood," and other nursery favorites gleamed and glistened as the supper went on.

At length the plates and dishes were all replaced, and then the company crowded around the nursery fender, which was keeping guard upon the fire-irons, that had broken away at first, as I have told you.

"Now," said the Soldier, "will you be pleased to tell us a tale, Miss Dolly, as you promised?"

"Listen!" said Dolly: "I think I heard mamma."

But little Kathleen was only moving in her sleep in the next room. All was silent; the fire quieted down, and every toy listened intently for Miss Dolly's story. Suddenly the poker tumbled down with a great clatter.

"What did you do that for?" asked the Soldier angrily.

"It was the Coal's fault," replied the Poker. "It puffed some smoke in my face."

"Well, get up and keep quiet," said Dolly.

"I can't," said the Poker. "I have only one leg."

"Lie quiet, then," said the fender; "rest on me—there. Now, Miss Dolly, please begin."

Then Dolly began her story as follows:

"I wish it to be understood that I am a wax doll, and belong to the Upper Ten Society. In Doll-land, where I was made, from would, we have—as human creatures have—our grades in society. We have the poor dolls in rags and in wood; the middle-class dolls in gutta-percha and india-rubber; we have the Spermaceti beauty and the Lady Wax—English wax; none of your English composition in our school—only true, pure wax!

"There are also foreigners in our world as in my mamma's world. We have French dolls, China dolls, Japanese dolls, and German dolls. We have our dress-makers, our shoemakers, our hair-dressers and hosiers, our house furnishers, our builders, our milliners, just like grown girls who are our mammas, and who nurse us, who carry us about, who wound us, and ill-treat us sometimes, put out our eyes, let out our sawdust, melt us into tears, or break our hearts.

"Ah, you children! Do you think a doll has no feelings, no soft heart, no limbs to be broken, no hair to lose? Well, then, we have.

"My first remembrance goes back to a beautiful shop, where I first had the pleasure of meeting my old friend, Mr. Soldier. Do you remember that time, Soldier?"

"I do," he said. "I stood on guard all day and night in the window over a railway-engine and two carriages, which met with an accident afterwards."

"I remember very well," continued Dolly, "a young and nice looking little girl coming in and saying—

"'Oh, mamma, I should like that beautiful doll.'

"I blushed. I had never thought I was pretty, but my lips and cheeks were red, and my dress was white, trimmed with blue, and I saw people admiring me from outside, but I didn't think why. Much better had I not.

"After awhile the young lady asked my price. I was sold to her, wrapped in beautiful silver paper, and carried away. I did not like to go at all. I had to leave the soldiers, the boats, the dogs, the whips and drums, all of which I liked very much, besides my brothers and a little sister that I loved very dearly. I tried to throw myself off the seat of the carriage, and very nearly did so.

"The lady scolded my new mamma for nearly letting me fall, but it was not her fault. I was sorry for my temper, and lay still until we reached home, when I remember a horrid cat came and put his nose in my face as I lay on a chair. I don't like cats.

"But I was unhappy. I pined for my sisters and my favorite place in the shop from which I could see the people. I was carried about for many days, and sometimes put to bed in the middle of the day. Then at night I was wrapped up and laid in a drawer, which I found very close; and one day I would not lie straight, so I was beaten and slapped by my young mamma till I cried my eyes out.

"Then my young lady was sorry. I could not see at all, and she could not put my eyes back. I heard her scolded, and then I was treated very kindly indeed. I had a new house, and a bath, and new dresses; but I was blind! It was terrible.

"At last, one day a gentleman came and talked to my mamma. He said he would have my eyes restored, and she thanked him. So I was carried away again, but met with an accident which so disabled me that I could not return.

"I was sent to the Infirmary and patched up; my eyes were put in, and again I could see; but I was not the same. My legs hurt me in the joints—I felt rheumatism, I suppose; and I was not so well dressed as before.

"At that time my present kind mamma, Miss Kathleen, came and bought me. She has given me new clothes, a nice house and everything I want. So I am very happy indeed. She nurses me when I am ill, and shows me everything. Now I am having holidays as you see, like you all. Here, I am glad to say, I have again met my old friend the Soldier, who kept guard over the train many months ago."

The Doll ceased speaking, and the Soldier's gaze made her blush red.

Then the clock on the stairs struck one, and suddenly all the toys ran back into the box, the bears climbed up the mantel-piece to their former places; the fire went out by itself; and the toy-box holiday was all over for that night.

RONALD AND THE STAGS.

BY JULIA GODDARD.

IT was a wild forest, and the tangled brushwood and bracken gave shelter to many deer who led a happy life amidst its silence and solitude.

They did not see many human beings, excepting in the season when men took pleasure in shooting them down; and as they remembered in each year friends or relatives lost to them through such visitations, they did not much care to see the human face, but rather fled when a man appeared in sight.

There was, however, one exception to this aversion on their part, and this was a lame boy, with great, dark eyes and a pale face. He could only move slowly about with a crutch, and his delight was to wander into the forest, and, lying down amongst the moss and ferns at the foot of some great tree, watch the graceful motions of the deer, wondering at their agility, and perhaps contrasting their fleetness with his own slow and awkward movements.

Ronald Hasseldine was the youngest child of a large family formerly living in that part of the country; and as a last hope of strengthening him for the coming winter, he had been sent to an old nurse who lived on the borders of the forest, where he might inhale the pure air and the breath of the pine woods.

He had dreamed away the summer in watching the deer, until he felt an absorbing interest in them. To him they were as near friends, whose interests he would guard as jealously as his own.

He knew them all, and had given names to them—Swift, Beauty, Light-wing, Fleet, Strong, Gentle, and others that seemed to express their qualities.

Strong and Swift were his especial favorites—they were so bold and fleet, and less shy than the others; they ventured nearer to him than most, and he indulged in the hope that some time they would come near enough to eat bread from his hand.

"You must leave the forest before the shooting season comes on, Master Ronald," said the old nurse; "you must not stay to see the deer shot down as I have seen them."

"Shot down!" exclaimed Ronald, "my Gentle, my Swift, my Strong—who would have the heart to do it?"

It came at last, but so far his especial deer had escaped; he counted them over every day, he spoke their names lovingly, he called to them and tried to coax them to come to him.

One cold day Strong and Swift had ventured a little nearer to him, and he kept quite still lest he should alarm them.

Whilst he was thus watching and waiting he started himself, for a sudden sound met his ears, and he saw Swift fall to the ground, and in another moment Strong suddenly sprang up, then fell back. And then a man leaped over a stone fence, saying, as he fired again—

"A good shot—a capital shot! Two brought down." And then he fired again, and Strong and Swift lay stretched out, dead—dead!

The boy was almost paralyzed for a moment, and then a sudden rush of indignant feeling, of sorrow, of anger came over him, and more quickly than one might have expected he had limped to the spot where the deer lay, and had thrown his arms round the neck of one of them.

"My Swift! my own poor Swift," said he, and he sobbed as if his heart would break.

"Heyday, Ronald; you here?" said the stranger. "It's a mercy you were not shot."

The boy looked up, but with flashing eyes.

"I do not know you," he said.

"But I know you, or rather I know who you must be. You are the son of my cousin, Archibald Hasseldine. Shake hands with me, and be thankful that you were not shot instead of the stag. Your father and I were boys here together."

The boy looked up again.

"I will not shake hands," said he, "and I shall dislike you all my life for killing my Swift and my Strong."

"Pooh! nonsense, child! The deer are mine, and I have a right to shoot them; and I can tell you it requires a good shot to bring them down as I did—a shot to be proud of. You'll understand this better when you are a man."

"Perhaps I shall never live to be a man," returned the boy. "I hear people say I shall not. But if men shoot deer for pleasure, I sha'n't care to be one." Then suddenly raising himself up, he added, "And they were beginning to know me, and I dare say before winter was over they would have eaten out of my hand."

And the tears streamed down the boy's cheeks.

"Why, you're a regular baby!" said his cousin; "not a bit of a Hasseldine. All this fuss about a stag. I've come down for some shooting, so you had better keep out of the way if you don't like it."

And he turned angrily away, whistling to his dog, and calling to the keepers to fetch the dead bodies of the stags.

The boy sat stroking the heads of the dead deer.

"I could not touch you in life, my poor fellows," said he, "but now that you are dead you do not mind. Oh, Swift! oh, Strong! how I have loved you and watched your pretty ways! All summer long you have been my pleasure. I will go home," he added; "I cannot stay to see my deer all killed as Swift and Strong have been."

And again the boy knelt down beside them, and softly kissed each on its forehead, and he thought that the great liquid eyes were locking at him still. Then he returned to the cottage.

The old nurse gave a cry when she saw him, for he was whiter than ever, and his hands and face and clothes were stained with blood.

"Oh, Master Ronald, what is it?"

"I am not hurt, nurse," replied the boy, "but Swift and Strong are shot, and are quite dead, and I cannot stay here any longer. I must go home now."

THE CATS AND THE FROG.

BY S. E. GIRTON.

MRS. MOUSER had two kittens who were growing so rapidly that they promised soon to be as large as their mother.

They were simple-minded cats, who had hitherto believed in all their mother told them, and thought that she knew more than all the rest of the world put together.

The world to them consisted of the farm-yard, the garden, and a paddock beyond; for Mrs. Mouser considered them too young to go upon long expeditions, though she often revolved in her mind the desirability of introducing them to her hunting grounds, where she procured many a stray rabbit, and sometimes even a young pheasant or partridge.

But there were dangers of traps and keepers, which it required the sagacity of a practiced cat to avoid, and Mrs. Mouser's kittens were very volatile and heedless. So though Mrs. Mouser had occasionally brought home a young rabbit for them, she had been very uncommunicative about it.

"Mice first, game afterwards," was Mrs. Mouser's maxim, as she took her kittens into the barn and granary for a run after the rats and mice.

The kittens became very expert, and as the love of hunting grew upon them they began to feel discontented and a little rebellious, and though Mrs. Mouser said, "trust your mother to know what is best for you," the kittens did not feel altogether disposed to take her advice.

One evening as they were sitting around a saucer of milk, a frog suddenly leaped on to the edge of it.

The kittens had never seen a frog before, and they regarded him with surprise, mingled with fear. They looked at their mother, who was also surveying the frog, and heard her say—

"Insolent! impertinent!"

The frog heard her also, but he was not abashed.

"So you would keep these beautiful kittens of yours in the farm-yard all their lives, whilst you go hunting and enjoying yourself?" said he.

At these words the kittens pricked up their ears. Evidently the frog could tell them what they wanted to know.

"Alas, my kittens, heed not the words of this false stranger."

"Oho!" said the frog.

"Oho! Mrs. Mouser, you are jealous. Well,
If you won't show them, I the way will tell
Where pheasants lurk and rabbits play,
And they can hunt throughout the day."

The kittens started up. That was just where they wished to go. The frog knew just as much as their mother—perhaps more; and he had said they were beautiful and graceful. They mewed complacently.

"Oh, kittens," said Mrs. Mouser, "do not be deceived by the flattery and the idle tongue of a stranger. Trust in me, trust in me."

But her words were unheeded. As the frog leaped onward the kittens followed him. They looked not whither they were going, but hastened after him.

Alas, one got into a trap, and would have been killed, but Dick, the cow-boy, found her and rescued her, and carried her back to the farm, where Mrs. Mouser received her tenderly, and licked her wounded paw.

The other kitten, plunging through tall grass and reeds and rushes suddenly found herself in a rapid stream. Fortunately, it was not deep and so she managed to struggle out in a very exhausted and half-drowned condition.

She made the best of her way homeward, where she was welcomed by her mother with much affection.

"Ah," said Mrs. Mouser; "remember my dear kittens that old friends are the best, and that it does not do to be running after every new acquaintance, whose words may sound well, but whom it is dangerous to follow."

THE TRUTH.—Truth comes to us only by glimpses. There are some who refuse to receive a partial truth, who insist upon having a clear idea of the whole, or at least upon persuading themselves that they have it, before they yield assent to anything. They will believe nothing which they cannot understand, they say, forgetting that, although we may both believe and understand many things to be true, it is only by occasional glimpses that we can ever discover how they came to beso. For instance, we all believe the wonders of the natural world, the existence and motions of the planets and stars, the changes in the earth's surface, the marvellous growth in the vegetable world, and the still more wonderful development of the animal creation—of conscious life and human intelligence. In believing these things we understand that they are so; but how they came to be so, how they perform their several functions, what are the laws which uphold them and the forces they obey—these things we do not understand, except as study or thought, or participation in another's thought, gives us glimpses of the truth.

ABOUT BRIGANDS.—"Strategy," says a writer in a contemporary, "is a thing to be admired when it is employed for the circumvention of rogues. While the French were in Mexico, stage robberies on the Monterey road became very frequent. The French commander resolved to put a stop to them, and this is how he did it:—

"He dressed up half a dozen Zouaves in ladies' attire, and sent them on in the next stage, their faces bidden by veils, their carbines hidden by their petticoats. The stage was stopped, the ladies, without waiting to be invited, left the vehicle and fell into line with the rest of the passengers. Suddenly a series of reports came from that line, and some dozen robbers lay dead; the rest discreetly disappeared.

"For a long while afterwards it was only requisite to display a shawl and bonnet conspicuously to secure a free passage for a stage on that road."

EVERYBODY has experienced the pain and annoyance of something getting into the eye. In the majority of cases if the sufferer has the patience to close the eye gently, and keep it immovably closed for from five minutes to a quarter of an hour, the offending particle will be painlessly and safely washed away by the tears which the eye will naturally shed.

IF big heads are a sign of astuteness, a cabbage should be sharper than a pin.

THE SABBATH DAY.

BY GEORGE HERBERT.

O day most calm, most bright!
The fruit of this, the next world's bud;
Th' endorsement of supreme delight,
Writ by a friend, and with his blood;
The couch of time; care's balm and bay;
The week were dark, but for thy light;—
Thy torch doth show the way.

The other days and thou
Make up one man; whose face thou art,
Knocking at heaven with thy brow.
The worky days are the back-part;
The burden of the week lies there,
Making the whole to stoop and bow,
Till thy release appear.

Man has straight forward gone
To endless death. But thou dost pull
And turn us round, to look on one,
Whom, if we were not very dull,
We could not choose but look on still;
Since there is no place so alone,
The which he doth not fill.

Sundays the pillars are
On which heaven's palace arched lies;
The other days fill up the spare
And hollow room with vanities.
They are the fruitful bed and borders
In God's rich garden; that is bare,
Which parts their ranks and orders.

The Sundays of man's life,
Threaded together on time's string,
Make bracelets to adorn the wife
Of the eternal, glorious King.
On Sunday, heaven's gate stands ope;
Blessings are plentiful and rife;
More plentiful than hope.

Thou art a day of mirth;
And, where the week-days trail on ground,
Thy flight is higher, as thy birth.
Oh, let me take thee at the bound,
Leaping with thee from seven to seven;
Till that we both, being toss'd from earth,
Fly hand in hand to heaven!

THE WEDDING DAY.

In Alsace and some places round about there exists a traditional usage, evidently a relic of ruder times, that at the close of a marriage feast the bride shall give one of her garters to the bridegroom's best man, who forthwith divides it into small pieces, which are distributed amongst the guests. In some manner the incident is associated with good luck.

Pin money, as a lady's dowry, had its origin with the introduction of pins, which were so expensive and withal so necessary to a lady's comfort, that a separate allowance was made to her for their purchase. The amount of the pin money formed at one time an item in the wedding contracts of the rich.

Pins were first introduced prior to the year 1347, when twelve thousand were delivered from the Royal wardrobe for the use of Princess Joan, and in the year, 1400, the Duchess of Orleans purchased in Paris, several thousand long and short pins, beside five hundred of English make.

In the fourteenth century, makers were only allowed to sell their commodity openly on the two great feast days of the year, and ladies and city dames flocked to the depots to buy them, having first been provided with "pin money" by their husbands.

Anciently a considerable sum of money was put into a purse or plate, and presented by the bridegroom to the bride on the wedding night; a custom common to the Greeks as well as the Romans, and which appears to have prevailed among the Jews and many Eastern nations. It was changed in the Middle Ages, and in the North of Europe, for the Morgengabe, or morning present, the bride having the privilege, the morning after marriage, of asking for any sum of money or any estate in her husband's possession that she pleased, and which could not, in honor, be refused by him. Something of the same kind prevailed in England under the name of the "Dow," or endowment purse

A trace of this is still kept up in rural Cumberland, where the bridegroom provides himself with gold and silver, and when the service reaches the point, "with all my worldly goods I thee endow," he takes up the money, hands the clergyman his fee, and pours the rest into a handkerchief, which is held by the bridesmaid for the bride. When Clovis was married to the Princess Clotilde, he offered by his proxy a sou and a dernier, the smallest coins current, which were the marriage offering, by law, in France; and to this day pieces of money are given to the bride, varying only in value according to the rank of the parties.

From some old plays it appears that knives were formerly part of the accoutrement of an English as well as of a German bride. The practice of wearing such articles and purses was pretty general among European ladies at the end of the sixteenth century. Wedding knives were presented, among other articles of a domestic character. Amongst the Norwegians, in Pagan times, the bride's wedding outfit included a sword, an axe, and a shield, with which to defend herself against any attack of her liege lord.

When Rolf, King of Norway, and Eric's daughter were married, they sat throned in state, whilst the King's courtiers passed before them and deposited offerings of oxen, sheep, sucking-pigs, horses, geese, and other live stock. Formerly, amongst poor people, there existed a custom of having Penny Weddings, at which the guests gave a contribution towards the feast and to endow the bride.

These however, were reprobated by the straiter-laced sort as leading to disorder and licentiousness, but it was found impossible altogether to suppress them. All that could be done was to place restrictions upon the amount allowed to be given; in Scotland the limit was fixed at five shillings. The custom is not quite obsolete at the present day, though it is only practiced in places far removed from the "busy hum."

It is from customs such as we have attempted to describe that our present elaborate system of giving presents at weddings has sprung, customs that can be traced back to the dark ages.

With our forefathers a great deal depended on the day and the month whether a marriage would be happy or not. For instance, they believed in the silly saw—

Marry in May, rue for aye,

a superstition to which some ancient writers, including Ovid, gave credence. It was also believed in by Sir Walter Scott, in more modern times, for we find that he hurried home from the Continent to prevent the marriage of his daughter to Mr. Lockhart taking place in the "unlucky month."

Why May should be considered an unfavorable time for entering into the happiest and most sacred of human relationships is not at all clear; but though we laugh at the notion, it still has its weight, as evidenced from the fact that it is the month in which fewest marriages are contracted.

The Japanese are extremely superstitious, and have innumerable signs and tokens by which to regulate their conduct and beliefs. At a marriage ceremony neither bride nor bridegroom wears any clothing of a purple color, lest their marriage tie be soon loosed, as purple is the color most liable to fade.

Every nation has its superstitions on this subject, and strangely enough, while other beliefs have died out and are forgotten, these remain to us, some with almost their original force.

Grains of Gold.

Prayer is the voice of faith.

One victory over one's self is worth ten thousand over others.

Sometimes it is exceedingly hard to tell where frankness ends and impudence begins.

What the age needs is time for reflection. We are, in the main, in too great a hurry.

Harbor not revenge in thy breast; it will torment thy heart and discolor its best inclinations.

But consider, and forget not, thine own weakness; so shalt thou pardon the failings of others.

Indulge not thyself in the passion of anger; it is whetting a sword to wound thy own breast, or murder thy friend.

Between the humble and contrite heart and the majesty of Heaven there are no barriers. The only password is prayer.

The first petition that we are to make to Almighty God is for a good conscience, the next for health of mind, and then of body.

If what is done be done in faith, some good things will come out of our mistakes even, only let no one mistake self-will for that perfect thing, faith.

Trouble is appointed for us all here below, and there comes a time when we need more comfort and help than the things of this life can give to us,

Nothing but a steady resolution brought to practice, God's grace used, His commandments obeyed, and His pardon begged—nothing but this will entitle you to God's acceptance.

Difficulty is a severe instructor, set over us by the supreme ordinance of a parental guardian and legislator, who knows us better than we know ourselves, and he loves us better too.

Femininities.

Wood-rose is a new color.

The mother's heart is the child's schoolroom.

Candidates for the degree of M. A.—Wives.

Sarah Bernhardt was a dressmaker's apprentice.

Consolation for old maids—Misfortunes never come singly.

Miss Ellen K. Abbott is teaching her 73d term of school at Webster, N. H.

It is fashionably reprehensive not to be connected in some way with a charitable society.

The Empress of Japan proposes to follow an illustrious example and "come to America."

Whether happiness may come or not, we should try to prepare ourselves to do without it.

Whooping cough paroxysms are relieved by breathing the fumes of turpentine or carbolic acid.

Revolving bookcases of a new kind are tall and narrow, with curtains to save the volumes from dust.

A folding bed nearly killed a Chicago woman, who was found doubled up and all but broken in two by it.

A woman who counts her children to the number of 23, it is stated, has been pensioned by the Mexican government.

It is only another illustration of the law of compensation that women advanced in views are apt to be behind in the fashions.

Sleeplessness caused by too much blood in the head may be overcome by applying a cloth wet with cold water to the back of the neck.

Enameled jewelry is more popular than ever. Flowers of all kinds glistening with diamond dewdrops make striking pins and pendants.

The first baby born in South Sioux City, Neb., was given a serenade by the band and presented with a corner lot in that promising town.

Chinese girls and young women in San Francisco are reported to be gradually adopting the American style of dress—even to the bang fashion of wearing the hair.

Madame, to maid: "Francoise, why do you clean my boots with my tooth brush?" Maid, to madame: "Madame, the fact is, the other brushes are so large and madame's boots are so small."

Do not place raw meat directly on ice, for the juices are apt to be withdrawn. It should never be left in the wrapping paper. Put it in an uncovered earthern dish and then set the dish on the ice.

Only a girl who has run a typewriter at $4 per week and finally married her employer can enter a dry goods store and paralyze a lady clerk receiving $6 per week. It's no use for a millionaire's wife to try it.

In all matters save one women are quick enough. They know the rights of a story before they hear it, and can tell a man what his thoughts are before he knows them himself, but they cannot judge the men who make love to them.

"Do you know why you and George remind me of two shades of one color?" asked a young lady of a companion, who had been engaged for a good many years. "No," was the reply. "I'll tell you, then. It's because you don't match."

A New Haven, Conn., woman attracted a great deal of attention to her house the other day by decorating it with mourning emblems and suspending across the street an effigy of Queen Victoria, surmounted by mottoes uncomplimentary to England.

Steps have been taken by Racine, Wis., election officers, it is stated, to institute legal proceedings against Rev. Olympia Brown Willis, on the charge of attempting to stuff the ballot box. Mrs. Willis is the leader of the woman suffragists of Wisconsin.

If a new broom be immersed in boiling water until it is quite cold, and then thoroughly dried in the air, it will be far more pleasant to use and last much longer. Frequent moistening of the broom is conducive to its usefulness and also to the carpets.

Several girls employed in a factory at New Britain, Conn., lured a "masher," who had been annoying one of their number by his impudent attentions, to a street where the mud was plenty and neighbors scarce, and there drubbed him and rolled him in the mire.

Six widows, says an exchange, live on six adjacent farms in the town of Venango, this State, and, what is more remarkable, they are all Hendersons, being the widows of the late Henderson brothers—Thomas, Samuel, Andrew, Stewart, William and Alexander.

Once and once only have we known a lap dog being an advantage to a young lady. This little animal had the peculiarity of always howling dismally whenever he heard a note of music. She was not a skilled musician, and this habit of her dog's spared her admirers a great deal.

Eight letters that were produced at a recent breach of promise hearing told the tale pretty clearly. The first commenced "Dear Mr. Smith," then followed "My Dear John," then "My Darling John," "My own Darling Jack," "My Darling John," "Dear John," "Dear Sir," "Sir," and all was over.

A common complaint. Tired wife: "John, I wish you would bring in some wood." Husband: "I would, my dear, but I have the lumbago again." "You have?" "Yes; the pains in my back are just terrible." "Why, what have you been doing?" "There were no seats left at the ball ground, and I had to stand up."

A Camden young lady has made an important discovery. To prevent other ladies from borrowing her newest music she just writes the name of her best admirer on the margin. She says the borrowers are afraid of the effect the sight of the name would have on their own young men, and don't ask for the marked copy.

Masculinities.

Laziness travels so slowly that Poverty soon overtakes him.

The man who believes talk is cheap never employed a lawyer.

Art of conversation — You convince a man, you persuade a woman.

The man who makes hay while the sun shines at times gets sun-struck.

Luminous harness is the latest device to make the dark horse visible at night.

Many a woman trusts her husband when he can't get trusted by anybody else.

A man who is not ashamed of himself need not be ashamed of his early condition.

There is now no established religion in Japan, and missionaries are regarded as harmless curiosities.

A Charlestown, Mass., young man's hat, gloves and hose match the color of his best girl's hair.

The law cannot make a man moral, but it can make him dreadfully uncomfortable when he is immoral.

Nine-tenths of the blind in poorhouses are bachelors. They probably lost their sight in trying to thread needles.

"You and Jones don't seem to be as thick as you were. Does he owe you any money?" "No; he wants to."

True politeness is perfect ease and freedom. It consists simply in treating others just as you love to be treated yourself.

The apprehension of evil is many times worse than the evil itself; and the ill a man fears he shall suffer, he suffers in the very fear of them.

Why is it that whenever you are looking for anything you always find it in the last place you look?—Because you always stop looking when you find it.

A Laurens, S. C., judge told a jury that if they convicted the defendant they would be paid for serving, but if they failed to convict they would get no pay.

"What is the matter with the baby?" asked a lady of a little girl, whose baby brother she had understood to be ailing. "Oh, nothin' much," was the answer; "he's only hatchin' teeth."

A correspondent announces the virtues of castor oil in the removal of warts. Constantly applied once a day, for from two to four or six weeks, it has not failed in any case of any size or long standing.

A curious present for a deaf person has been introduced in Germany—a fan, deftly concealing a tiny ear-trumpet in its end stick. Gentlemen can have their ear-trumpets hidden in a walking-cane.

Many American ladies in London are said to be unable to find ready-made shoes there small enough to fit them, the average of the American being greatly below the average English foot in size.

If a man, whose integrity you do not very well know, makes you great and extraordinary professions, do not give much credit to him. Probably you will find that he aims at something besides kindness to you.

Conversation of two young ladies overheard at a dinner-table: "Well, dear, and how do you like your false teeth?" "Oh, very much! They are a great improvement; they help so much to domesticate the food."

She, parrot in one hand, dog in other: "Yes, Edward, we've got everything, I believe—but, where's the baby?" He: "Why, I gave it to you." She; "I know, and I gave it back to you." He: "Well, by thunder! if I haven't gone and left it in the parlor car!"

Bishop Warren, of the Methodist Episcopal Church, does not believe in gentle preaching to rich sinners. He says there are some pastors who go at it in this style: "Brethren, you must repent, as it were, and be converted, in a measure, or you will be damned, to some extent."

As a general rule, each woman is morally superior to the man whom she marries, and more capable than he of the domestic virtues. We will tell you why. It is because women have in a higher degree than men that crowning excellence of marriage—the spirit of self-sacrifice.

As a cure for earache take a common tobacco pipe, put a piece of cotton-wool in the bowl, pour on ten drops of chloroform and cover with another pad of cotton. Place the stem of the pipe to the afflicted ear and blow into the bowl, when in most cases the pain will be speedily relieved.

There may be more pathos in the fall of a collar or the curl of a lock than the shallow think for. Should we be so apt as we are now to compassionate the misfortunes and to forgive the insincerity of Charles I. if his pictures had portrayed him in a bob-wig and a pig-tail? Vandyke was a greater sophist than Hume.

A paper read before the German Royal Statistical Society is cited to show that the mortality among the professional and independent classes is much less than in the laboring classes. It says the most healthy persons are clergymen, farmers and gardeners; the most unhealthy, inn and hotel servants, general laborers and fruit sellers.

If a person be passionate and give you ill language, rather pity him than be moved to anger. You will find that silence, or very gentle words, are the most exquisite revenge for reproaches; they will either cure the distemper in the angry man and make him sorry for his passion, or they will be a severe reproof and punishment to him.

A Chicago man paid $150 a few weeks ago for a new and improved incubator. He placed therein $25 worth of high-priced eggs, and hired a boy to attend at a further expense of $25. The time having fully expired, he went to inspect the incubator and see how many of the eggs had hatched. The only living thing he found was a large bluebottle fly, which he caught and put in a bottle. He exhibits this insect to inquiring friends as the only $200 fly in the United States.

Recent Book Issues.

FRESH PERIODICALS,

Cassell's Family Magazine for June has, among other notable contributions, papers on "Peddlers and Hawkers," "How to Secure Flowers Eight Months in the Year," "The Social Position of Divers Animals," "Famous Flags of Field and Fleet, "The Making of Entrees;" a very interesting article by S. Baring-Gould, on "The Brunswick Ghost," serial and short stories, poems, music, a large number of capital illustrations, and an exceptionally interesting "Gatherer," with its record of Invention and Discovery. Published by Cassell & Co., New York.

The Forum for June is edifying reading from cover to cover. Professor F. L. Patton has a very thoughtful paper, "Is Andover Romanizing?" Andrew Lang discusses "Books that Have Helped Me;" Professor G. J. Romanes contributes a thoroughly readable article, "What is the Object of Life?" John Fulton tells "Why the Revised Version Has Failed;" Eliza Lynn Linton discourses "On Things Social;" the Rev. Dr. J. M. Buckley writes thoughtfully about "Capital Punishment," and in advocacy of it;" Edward Carey has an admirable paper on "An Evil of the Schools;" and Professor R. H. Thurston provides a timely article on "The Form and Speed of Yachts." In both its literature and its topics the number is strong and attractive. Published by the Forum Publishing Company, New York.

The June number of *The Eclectic* has an attractive table of contents which indicates both strength and variety. Prof. Huxley has the place of honor in a paper entitled "Science and Pseudo Science." Carl Rosa discusses English opera, and Robert Louis Stevenson, in his article "The Day After To-morrow," attempts to show what would be the result, should Henry Georgeism or Socialism be victorious. H. D. Traill continues a suggestive discussion of the uses of Parliament. The author of "John Halifax" talks very sensibly about the marriage relation and divorce under the head of "For Better or Worse." "Fluctuation in Trade and Wages," by George Howell, "The Decline of the Drama," by Harry Quilter, and "The Making of Britain," by Archibald Geikie, are all articles of noticeable interest. Baron Tennyson contributes a jubilee poem, "Carmen Seculare," and Sir Theodore Martin gives a new version of "Schiller's "Song of the Bell." There are other short papers and stories of interest. Published by E. R. Pelton, No. 25 Bond street, New York.

The frontispiece of the June *Century* is a striking portrait of Count Leo Tolstoi, the Russian novelist, an interview with whom is recorded by George Kennan in a paper entitled "A Visit to Count Tolstoi." Mrs. Van Rensselaer's series of papers on the great English cathedrals, treats this month of Peterborough, illustrated. Julian Hawthorne has a paper on "College Boat-Racing," and a Yale man contributes an article on "Boat-Racing for Amateurs." The Lincoln history makes marked progress toward the Presidential contest of 1860. It is illustrated with a number of portraits. Rev. T. T. Munger has a thoughtful and suggestive paper on "Education and Social Progress." The war series includes "From the Wilderness to Cold Harbor," by Gen. E. M. Law, and "Hand-to-Hand Fighting in Spottsylvania." There are also a couple of brief war papers in "Memoranda," and an editorial article on "Lord Wolseley's Estimate of Gen. Lee." The fiction comprises Mr. Stockton's serial "The Hundredth Man," and a strong short story by Miss Elizabeth Stuart Phelps. The poetical contributions are numerous, and the several departments are well-filled with interesting and entertaining matter.

THERE is a strange and weird fascination about stories of living burial. One of the most gruesome of these which we have seen for some time is sent by the Odessa correspondent of the *Daily News*: Major Majuroff, Aide-de-camp to the Governor-General of Odessa, was believed to have died suddenly three weeks since. He was buried with all military honors forty hours after his supposed death. But after he had been a fortnight in the grave—"while the family vault in the necropolis was being renovated for the Russian Feast of the Dead, the coffin lid was noticed to have been forced partly open. It was immediately removed, and the body found face downwards. The face was dreadfully lacerated, and the flesh gnawed from the hands. The corpse was still bleeding, which confirms the statement of a workman that his attention was first attracted by a noise in the coffin, and the unfortunate major died only on the instant of the appalling discovery." The idea of the "corpse" reviving after burial, prolonging existence for fourteen days by eating the flesh off its own hands, and then dying just as the lid was opened, is as terrible as anything Edgar Allan Poe ever conceived.

IT is a curious fact that persons far from robust often outlive those of extraordinary strength and hardihood. The vital parts of the system must be well balanced in order to attain long life, and that excessive strength in one part is a source of danger. Hence an over-developed muscular system invites dissolution because it is a continuous strain on the less powerful organs, and finally wears them out.

EXPECT not praise without envy until you are dead.

Her Fairy Godmother.

BY G. H.

TO MY Grand-aunt Halliday's!" said Lissie, bursting into tears. "Up in the Lake District, where the grass grows in the middle of the road, and there isn't a wagon goes past unless you count the hay-carts and the coach, in the summer."

"Horrible!" said Miss Brown, the companion.

"I'd as soon be buried alive!" sobbed Lissie.

"I never heard of anything so cruel in all my life," said Susan, the maid-of-all work.

"Do hold your tongue, Susan, and get about your work," said Lissie, sharply. "Who asked you to interfere? Mamma will be very angry when she comes in and finds the drawing-room is not done up."

And Susan slunk away rather discomfited, while Miss Brown remained to console pretty Lissie Lawson as she helped to pack the boxes which were to go to Aunt Halliday's.

"And I'm not even to be allowed to bid him good-bye," wailed the forlorn young damsel. "Oh, I don't see how mamma can be so hard-hearted."

"Is he very handsome?" said Miss Brown, whose life had not known many love affairs.

"Exactly like a Troubadour," said Lissie enthusiastically.

"Dear, dear!" said Miss Brown, with a vague idea of black velvet, a guitar, and white satin sleeve-linings.

"With melancholy eyes, and a moustache as black as ink," said Lissie. "Oh, don't put my collars in the same tray with the French-heeled boots, please."

"And what is his business?" said Miss Brown.

"He is here on a private embassy for the Russian Government," said Lissie proudly. "But that's just what mamma won't believe. He says he cannot divulge his identity without betraying his trust; as soon as his mission is over he says he will produce the most satisfactory explanations; but mamma actually believes him to be an impostor."

"Oh, dear!" said Miss Brown.

"You see, mamma isn't a physiognomist," said Lissie, "or she would read truth plainly inscribed upon his noble brow. The checked summer-silks next, Miss Brown, though I don't know what use checked summer-silks will be to me at Grand-aunt Halliday's."

"But you can write to him every day, dear," soothed Miss Brown.

"They will intercept the letter," sighed Lissie.

"Never mind," said Miss Brown, folding up an Indian foulard polonaise, "the torch of love will burn all the brighter for a few brief obscurations."

"What a dear comforting creature you are," said Lissie, stooping to kiss Miss Brown's knobby forehead.

"I, too, have passed through the fiery ordeal," sighed Miss Brown, returning the caress, as she packed a cologne-bottle and a travelling inkstand into the muffling folds of a red Shetland shawl.

So Lissie Lawson was sent to Grand-aunt Halliday's, at the foot of Buttermere, to get out of the way of Mr. Algernon De Courcy.

She was a little disappointed that the snug cottage was not more dungeon-like, and that the solitary mountain-path turned out to be a well-travelled turnpike.

She had made up her mind to thorough martyrdom; and Mrs. Halliday, instead of being a hooked-nose old crone, with a gold-headed cane and a temper, was a cheerful old lady, whose cheeks were tinted with fresh bloom, like a winter apple, and who wore a black silk dress with pretty lace ruffles.

The drawing-room floor was covered with a real Turkey carpet; there was a cabinet of old china in the corner; a little maid in a white cap waited at the table; and Grand-aunt Halliday's jewel-case was a marvel to behold.

The old lady had travelled abroad, read all the newest books, and drove a little basket-phaeton with a fat, dappled pony, and, to Lissie's surprise, she was eminently sympathetic.

"Dear aunty," said the girl, "I never dreamed you were as nice as this."

"Well, my dear," said Grand-aunt Halliday, "I have been young myself, and I don't believe in putting too much constraint upon the heart"—here Lissie jumped up and kissed her—"so, when I got your mother's letter, I thought the whole matter over. If you really believe you can't live without this young man—"

"Darling aunty," faltered Lissie, may I tell you a secret?"

"Confide entirely in me, my child," said Grand-aunt Halliday, patting her dimpled cheek.

"Well, then, he met me under the apple tree last night," confessed Lissie, "by the light of the moon."

"You've written to him, then?" said Grand-aunt Halliday, with a shrewd twinkle in her hazel eyes.

"Y-yes," owned Lissie. "I told him it was unlike anything that I had anticipated. I described your pretty furniture and choice china, and the solid silver tea-service, with the Halliday monogram on it, and your set of amethysts, and he came on by the earliest train."

"Oh, he did?" said Grand-aunt Halliday.

"He said he was hungering and thirsting for one of my sweet glances," added Lissie, blushing very prettily. "And he slept on the hay in the barn last night."

"My dear child, this will never do," pronounced Grand-aunt Halliday. "He must come here."

"Here, aunty?"

"I want to see him for myself," said Mrs. Halliday.

"But what will mamma say?"

"Your mother, my child, has every confidence in my judgment," said Grand-aunt Halliday impressively. "Didn't I tell you that it was no part of my theory to put an unnatural force upon the inclinations? If he really loves you so devotedly he shall have at least a chance. It isn't in the fitness of things that my grand-niece's suitor should be sneaking around the back orchard, and sleeping in the hay-loft like a tramp."

Lissie colored a little.

"But what else could he do, Aunt Halliday?" said she.

"For that very reason," said the old lady, with dignity, "I invite him here as a guest. My husband's nephew, Tom Freshfield, is to be here to-night from Manchester, but there is plenty of room. Tom shall sleep in the cedar chamber. Mr. De Courcy shall have the red room. Where is he now?"

"I—I think he's having a cigar and reading the newspaper in the road," rather guiltily confessed Lissie.

"Go and call him in," said Mrs. Halliday. "Tell him he shall be welcome."

And Lissie obeyed, scarcely able to believe her own ears.

"She's a deal better than any fairy godmother I ever heard of," thought she.

Mr. De Courcy was indeed tall and Troubadour-like. He had dark, pensive eyes, and wore a very handsome satin necktie; and if his finger-nails were not as clean as Mrs. Halliday liked to see, and his pocket-handkerchiefs were not of the finest linen, still, people thought differently upon such subjects.

"Tom Freshfield looks the most of a gentleman," thought Mrs. Halliday.

And even Lissie, in mental comparison, could not help owning to herself that Mr. Freshfield seemed the most at his ease.

"But then," thought Lissie, "he hasn't any diplomatic troubles on his mind. I wish, though, that dear Algernon wouldn't eat green peas with his knife, and that he would take a little more notice of the chair-covers, and not drag them off every time he sits down. I never knew before that he took snuff. I hope it won't make Grand-aunt Halliday nervous."

But Grand-aunt Halliday smiled her sweetest, and seemed to notice nothing amiss.

And Tom Freshfield diligently talked politics, and did his best to amuse the stranger.

Nevertheless when Lissie went to bed that night she was not so happy as she had expected to be.

For a diplomat, Mr. De Courcy was not so remarkably intelligent, after all, and she was very certain that his grammar was not altogether correct.

She hoped that Tom Freshfield had not observed it.

In the dead of night, Grand-aunt Halliday's hand fell softly on Lissie's shoulder. She started up.

"Hush!" said the old lady. "Don't utter a sound. Get up, come downstairs with me."

"What is the matter?" gasped the girl.

"Your fine lover is breaking into my big walnut-wood escritoire," said Mrs. Halliday. "He has a complete set of burglar's tools. But don't look so frightened, my dear. The jewel case is there, but it is empty. Tom Freshfield has the pins and pendants at the county bank. He's welcome to all he can find.

"And Tom and the farm-laborer have got his accomplice safely tied outside; and they're ready to seize on him the moment he steps across the threshold. But come, I want you to see for yourself!"

And, standing on the staircase, where she could peep through the fanlight into the dining-rooms, Lissie beheld her Troubadour lover picking locks and prizing open drawers in a most business-like manner.

In spite of her resolution she uttered a little cry.

Mr. De Courcy looked up and saw her; the next instant the room was in darkness.

* * * * * *

"But we caught the fellow as neatly as possible," Mr. Tom Freshfield said, afterwards, "with empty jewel case in his possession, and a lot of silver spoons in his breast-pocket. He's an old hand, the authorities say. 'Light-fingered Larry,' they call him; and he's safe to get a long term of penal servitude."

Alas, poor Lissie!

"But how did you know he was a thief, Aunt Halliday?" said she.

"I didn't know, child," said the old lady. "I only suspected that everything wasn't right. But don't fret; one doesn't expect a young girl like you to be the best judge of character in the world. Tom Freshfield declared he was a rascal the first moment he set eyes on him."

"You see," said Tom, "he never looked me straight in the eyes. That is an unfailing symptom."

And Tom Freshfield set himself so diligently to work to console the disillusionized maiden that he soon succeeded in restoring her temporarily eclipsed smiles.

So the expedition to Grand-aunt Halliday's proved a success, after all.

The Algernon De Courcy engagement was broken up, and there is every probability that a new one will rise, Phœnix-like, out of its ashes, in which Mr. Tom Freshfield will have a word to say.

ALWAYS say a kind word if you can.

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Always in the house. Its use will prove beneficial on all occasions of pain or sickness. There is nothing in the world that will stop pain or arrest the progress of disease as quickly as the Ready Relief.

It is pleasant to take as a tonic, anodyne or soothing lotion.

Where epidemic diseases prevail, such as Fevers, Dysentery, Cholera, Influenza, Diphtheria, Scarlet Fever, Pneumonia and other malignant diseases, RADWAY'S READY RELIEF will, if taken as directed, protect the system against attacks, and if seized with sickness, quickly cure the patient.

Malaria in its Various Forms, Fever and Ague.

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Not only cures the patient seized with malaria, but if people exposed to it will every morning on getting out of bed take twenty or thirty drops of the READY RELIEF in a glass of water and drink it and eat, say a cracker, they will escape attacks.

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For the cure of all disorders of the Stomach, Liver, Bowels, Kidneys, Bladder, Nervous Diseases, Loss of Appetite, Headache, Costiveness, Indigestion, Biliousness, Fever, Inflammation of the Bowels, Piles, and all derangements of the Internal Viscera. Purely vegetable, containing no mercury, minerals or deleterious drugs.

PRICE, 25c PER BOX. Sold by all druggists.

"A FINE, SURE MEDICINE."

RADWAY & CO.—*Gentlemen:* Your Pills have often warded off sickness in my family. I never think it safe to be without them; they are a fine, sure medicine. Most respectfully yours,

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I am using your R. R. Relief and your Regulating Pills and have recommended them above all pills, and sell a great many of them. I have them on hand always, and use them in my practice and in my own family, and expect to, in preference of all Pills. Yours respectfully,

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For information worth thousands will be sent to you.

TO THE PUBLIC.—Be sure and ask for RADWAY'S and see that the name "RADWAY" is on what you buy.

Humorous.

A SPORTSMAN'S LOVE.

A sportsman winged by Cupid's dart
Said to the maid he loved, "My deer,
Your wiles have fast enchained my hart
With lynx of steel, 'tis very clear.

"I quail to think of my sad lot,
My bittern never-ending woe;
Should my fawn dreaming come to nought,
I think 'twould lay this buffalo.

"Heron my knees I doe declare
I'd gladly, freely diver thee;
Owlet me all thy burdens bear—
Thy sor-rocs, share them all with me!

"You otter know how bad I feel,
To your sea-duck-tive arts a prey.
If you refuse, your heart is teal—
Say weasel wed, and name the day."

She smiled, the minx, and, blushing, said,
"Think not that I woodchuck you over,
Knowing how badger heart has bled—
Besides you'll make a bang-up plover!"
—U. N. NONE.

A dead set—Spectres.

Spirit of the press—Cider.

Fine fellows—Magistrates.

White lies—Pillow shams.

A stunning article—A club.

The roll-call—The baker's cry.

Trees that never grow—Axletrees.

Sisters of charity—Faith and hope.

A new name for tight boots—A corn crib.

A piller of the church—A pious apothecary.

Paying the piper—Settling with the gasfitter.

Favorite game with the ocean—Pitch and toss.

Burglar's advertisement—Goods carefully removed.

The business that goes altogether on tick—Telegraph.

Make smallpox fashionable, and society would go miles to get it.

When may a clock be said to conceal itself?—When it gets behind time.

A horticultural wag says that the language of flowers is uttered by tu-lips.

Why is a great bore like a tree?—Because both appear best when leaving.

The book that makes the greatest stir in society is the well-filled pocket-book.

Why ought slander to be made chief of detectives?—Because it is impossible to escape it.

Why is the feeblest moustache like the sickliest child?—Because it gets the most fondling.

Food for reflection. Veal-pie, lobster-salad, cheese. No sleep; plenty of time to think.

What is that which never asks any questions, but requires many answers?—The street door.

What would be likely to be a military man's favorite amusement on board ship?—Sword-fishing.

Why is the end of a dog's tail like the heart of a tree?—Because they are both farthest from the bark.

"If I cannot have the fat of the land, I can take a little lean," said a tramp, as he rested his shoulder against a lamp-post.

Mr. Parvenu: "James, how many t's in Brixton?" Clerk: "Only one, sir." Mr. P.: "So I supposed. Hand me a penknife."

A young physician once asked Dr. Oliver Wendell Holmes for a suitable motto. "Small fevers gratefully received," was the response.

You can't make a man a gentleman by calling him one. But sometimes you can please him and carry your point, and that is more to your purpose.

A poet writes: "I know sweet songs I cannot sing." There are a great many other persons in the same predicament, but unfortunately they insist upon singing them.

A New York paper recommends a baby in the house as a protection against the midnight burglar. But there are people who prefer to take their chances against the burglar.

A scientist has discovered that the mosquito's mission is to purify stagnant water. Why in the name of common sense doesn't he keep away from people, then, and attend to business?

"Boy," he said, as he halted beside a boothlack who was eating a big turnip, "I'm afraid that's bad for you." "Yes—yum—but you'd better put out all your sympathy on the turnip," was the reply, as he bit off another quarter section.

An advertisement appeared lately as follows: "For sale, a very rare postage stamp, time of Henry VIII." A correspondent, on calling the advertiser's attention to the fact that there were no postage stamps at that time, recieved for answer, "That is the reason the stamp is so rare."

Bride: "I must have your advice, doctor. My husband has the nightmare nearly every night, and frightens me half to death." Doctor: "I presume, as there are only two in the family, you attend to all the housekeeping duties yourself?" Bride: "Yes." Doctor: "Well, hire some one else to do the cooking."

Stumps, the farmer, has married a city girl who is trying to learn country ways. She has heard her husband say that he must buy a dog, and responds: "Oh, yes, Chawles, buy a setter dog. He can be a watch dog at night and set on the eggs all day; for I can't make the hens set, though I've held 'em down an hour at a time."

SNAKY ASSASSINS.—A recent writer on serpents regales us with this information: In certain parts of Bengal there is a race of gypsies, one of which for a fee will furnish a small cobra to any applicant, and ask no questions. A man who desires to commit murder procures one of these reptiles, and places it within a bamboo just long enough to let the head protrude a little at one end and the tail at the other. Armed with this deadly weapon, the murderer creeps softly to his enemy's tent at dead of night, cuts a hole in the wall and introduces the bamboo. The tortured reptile, careless upon whom it wreaks its animosity, strikes its fangs into the sleeper and is then withdrawn, and the assassin steals silently away. Snakes are often employed in tropical countries as a sort of domestic animal. The ship chandlers of Rio Janeiro, for example, have each a boa housed among their bulky goods to act as a ratcatcher. These often become partially tamed and are then recruited by menageries, so that they afford an income to their owners.

OLD AT THIRTY.—The government of the house of the Indian Brahmin is strictly in the hands of the man: of the father during the youth of the family, and of the eldest son after he marries. The son always takes his wife home to the parental roof, and as the sons marry, additions are built to the house until it becomes a village in itself.

In this place the women are imprisoned—literally buried alive. From the day of their marriage, which is at a very early age, they never see more of the outer world than the narrow expanse of sky and cloud that looks down upon them between the walls of their prison house.

No men are allowed to enter the house but the members of the family and the priest, except on very rare occasions, and then unseen by the women. Married at ten years—for spinsterhood is abominable—mothers at twelve, they are faded and old at twenty, and they die of sheer old age at about thirty.

FALSE IDEALS.—False ideals of happiness haunt the ways of men and lead them on to danger and destruction through the siren song of fantasy. One makes his of wealth. He has enough now for all the purposes of refined living; but he wants that extra, that margin, by which enough may be broadened out into excess and refinement may be made to include frantic luxury and insolent ostentation. "When I shall have so much, I will be content," he says to himself. But he is never content. If he gets a hundred thousand dollars, he wants two; if two, three; and so on, till he covets a million, which then, when compassed, shall positively be the term and boundary of his desires. But the million spreads out and rolls on, as the hundred thousand had done before it.

HOW A PARROT BROKE OFF A MATCH.—A breach-of-promise action will probably be heard shortly in Dublin in which a parrot will figure prominently. An elderly professional gentleman, engaged to a pretty girl in her teens, was visiting her father and knocked at the study-door. A parrot he had presented to the young lady shrieked out, "Come in! come in!" and on suddenly entering the room he found his fiancee seated on the sofa with a young man uncoiling his arm from her waist, the parrot meanwhile imitating the sound of kissing and concluding with mocking laughter. The marriage was broken off and an action for breach of promise raised. The defendant pleads justification.

SOLOMON'S TEST.—The Chinese version of Solomon's Judgment is that when the case of two mothers and one child came before a wise mandarin he handed the matter over to his wife for decision. She ordered that the child's clothes should be secretly put on a fish, which, thus disguised, should be thrown into the river. This was done, and the woman who ran shrieking into the water to save the child was declared to be the mother. The mandarin chuckled at his bright idea.

OLD BLOONOSE: "Jane, what has become of Mr. Ditowaite? He used to be a frequent visitor." Jane (snarply): "I am afraid that he wasn't treated very well when he did call." Bloonose: "What! I'm surprised! There wasn't a night he called to see you that I didn't go into the parlor and smoke my old clay pipe for hours, just as sociable as if I'd known him for years."

HUMPHREYS'
HOMEOPATHIC
SPECIFIC No. 28

In use 30 years. The only successful remedy for
Nervous Debility, Vital Weakness,
and Prostration, from over-work or other causes.
$1 per vial, or 5 vials and large vial powder, for $5.
SOLD BY DRUGGISTS, or sent postpaid on receipt of price.—Humphreys' Medicine Co., 109 Fulton St., N. Y.

IMPROVED HIRES ROOT BEER
5 CENTS PACKAGE
Makes Five Gallons of a delicious, sparkling temperance beverage. Strengthens and purifies the blood. Its purity and delicacy commend it to all. Sold by druggists and storekeepers everywhere.

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$250 A MONTH. Agents wanted. 90 best selling articles in the world. 1 sample free. Address JAY BRONSON, Detroit, Mich.

LYDIA E. PINKHAM'S
VEGETABLE COMPOUND
OFFERS THE
SUREST REMEDY
FOR THE
PAINFUL ILLS AND DISORDERS SUFFERED BY WOMEN EVERYWHERE.

It relieves pain, promotes a regular and healthy recurrence of periods and is a great help to young girls and to women past maturity. It strengthens the back and the pelvic organs, bringing relief and comfort to tired women who stand all day in home, shop and factory.

Leucorrhœa, Inflammation, Ulceration and Displacements of the Uterus have been cured by it, as women everywhere gratefully testify. Regular physicians often prescribe it.

Sold by all Druggists. Price $1.00.

Mrs. Pinkham's "Guide to Health" mailed to any lady sending stamp to the Laboratory, Lynn, Mass.

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IN HAIR.

Inventor of the celebrated GOSSAMER VENTILATING WIG and ELASTIC BAND TOUPEE.

Instructions to enable Ladies and Gentlemen to measure their own heads with accuracy:

FOR WIGS, INCHES:
No. 1. The round of the head.
No. 2. From forehead over the head to neck.
No. 3. From ear to ear over the top.
No. 4. From ear to ear round the forehead.

TOUPEES AND SCALPS, INCHES.
No. 1. From forehead back as far as bald.
No. 2. Over forehead as far as required.
No. 3. Over the crown of the head.

He has always ready for sale a splendid Stock of Gents' Wigs, Toupees, Ladies' Wigs, Half Wigs, Frizettes, Braids, Curls, etc., beautifully manufactured, and as cheap as any establishment in the Union. Letters from any part of the world will receive attention.

Private rooms for Dyeing Ladies' and Gentlemen's Hair.

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IS THE BLACKING
ONLY DRESSING
THAT WILL PRODUCE
A POLISH WITHOUT SHRINKING, CRACKING
OR HARDENING THE LEATHER
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ALL SHOE DEALERS SELL IT

Agents make $5 a day with Plush Cheapest in U. S. Particulars free. FOSHER & MAKIN, Cincinnati, O. ALBUMS

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PILES. Instant relief. Final cure and never returns. No indelicacy. Neither knife, purge, salve or suppository. Liver, kidney and all bowel troubles—especially constipation—cured like magic. Sufferers will learn of a simple remedy free, by addressing, J. H. REEVES, 78 Nassau St., N. Y.

Agents Wanted for Dr. Luman Abbott's Life of Beecher. Only proper one. A. Gorton & Co., Phila.

PENSIONS Officers' pay, bounty procured; deserters relieved. 3 21 years' practice. Success or no fee. Write for circulars and new laws. A. W. McCormick & Son, Washington, D.C.

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BLOOM OF YOUTH
WHITE LILAC SOAP

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It will immediately obliterate all such imperfections and is perfectly harmless.

It has been chemically analysed by the Board of Health of New York City, and pronounced entirely free from any material injurious to the health or skin.

Price, 75 Cents Per Bottle.

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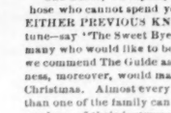
The new and exquisite Toilet Soap which for perfect Purity and Permanency of Delicate fragrance is unequalled for either Toilet or Nursery use. No materials unless carefully selected and absolutely pure ever enter into its manufacture, hence this Soap is perfectly reliable for use in the Nursery and unrivalled for general Toilet use.

LAIRD'S WHITE LILAC TOILET SOAP is refreshing and soothing to the skin, leaving it beautifully clear soft and smooth.

Price, 20c. per Cake. Box 3 Cakes 50c.
Sent by Mail upon Receipt of Price.

Sold by Druggists and Fancy Goods Dealers Everywhere.



TO PLAY MUSIC
WITHOUT STUDY!

This Can Be Done by Means of the

INSTANTANEOUS GUIDE to the PIANO or ORGAN.

Anyone knowing a tune, either "in the head," as it is called, or able to hum, whistle or sing, can play it WITHOUT ANY PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE OF MUSIC OR THE INSTRUMENTS. In fact it may be the first time they have ever seen a piano or organ, yet if they know so much as to whistle or hum a tune—say "Way Down on the Swanee River," for instance—they can play it IMMEDIATELY, correctly and with good effect, on the piano or organ, with the assistance of this GUIDE. THE GUIDE shows how the tunes are to be played with both hands and in different keys. Thus the player has the full effect of the bass and treble clefs, together with the power of making correct and harmonious chords in accompaniments. It must be plainly understood that the Guide will not make an accomplished musician without study. It will do nothing of the kind. What it can do, do well and WITHOUT FAIL is to enable anyone understanding the nature of a tune or air in music to play such tunes or airs, without ever having opened a music book, and without previously needing to know the difference between A or G, a half-note or a quarter-note, a sharp or a flat. The Guide is placed on the instrument, and the player, without reference to anything but what he is shown by it to do, can in a few moments play the piece accurately and without the least trouble. Although it does not and never can supplant regular books of study, it will be of incalculable assistance to the player by "ear" and all others who are their own instructors. By giving the student the power to play IMMEDIATELY twelve tunes of different character—this number of pieces being sent with each Guide—the ear grows accustomed to the sounds, and the fingers used to the position and touch of the keys. So, after a very little practice with the Guide, it will be easy to pick out, almost with the skill and rapidity of the trained player, any air or tune that may be heard or known.

The Guide, we repeat, will not learn how to read the common sheet music. But it will teach those who cannot spend years learning an instrument, how to learn a number of tunes without EITHER PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE OR STUDY. A child if it can say its A, B, C's and knows a tune—say "The Sweet Bye and Bye"—can play it, after a few attempts, quite well. There are many who would like to be able to do this, for their own and the amusement of others, and to such we commend The Guide as BOUND TO DO for them ALL WE SAY. Its cheapness and usefulness, moreover, would make it a very good present to give a person, whether young or old, at Christmas. Almost every home in the land has a piano, organ or melodeon, wherein seldom more than one of the family can play. With this Guide in the house everybody can make more or less good use of their instruments.

The Guide will be sent to any address, all postage paid, on receipt of FIFTY CENTS. (Postage stamps, 2's, taken.) For Ten Cents extra a music book, containing the words and music for 100 popular songs, will be sent with The Guide. Address

THE GUIDE MUSIC CO.,
726 SANSOM ST., PHILADELPHIA.

Latest Fashion Phases.

The new trimmings recall the descriptions of oriental colorings with which the "Arabian Nights" have made us familiar. They seem better suited to an Eastern queen than the prosaic everyday requirements of Western civilization.

Ball and evening gowns generally are to have front breadths glimmering with pendant spear-heads of glass which hang from tulle of exactly the same tint; and the variety is so great that it is by no means difficult to match any tone needed.

"Present a bold front to the enemy" is sound advice, and in dress it is the appearance of a gown as you approach it which conveys a favorable or non-favorable impression; hence the best dressmakers are devoting even more attention than usual to the fronts of skirts. By a clever arrangement of fulness about the hem they give more importance to the dress, and make the feet look small. Pleatings and ruchings are the groundwork, but the good effect is virtually produced by the tassels of beads and the ornaments which are freely interspersed.

Many kinds of material are made the foundation for embroidery, which has attained great perfection both as to design, work and coloring. Crepe lisse shows these off well, and in pure cream it is worked with bands of net insertion let in, and on which all the cashmerienne tones are introduced.

There are fronts of bodices and skirts of this, and plenty of gold and silver embroidered nets; but they are not so costly nor half so beautiful as the gros grains worked in red silk embroidery with handsome floral designs.

They show the favorite shape of bodice trimming, viz., the stomacher with a defined point, just as Mme. Pompadour and Mme. Du Barry and other well-known beauties wore them when the art of dress had most certainly attained its greatest glory.

Wild and natural roses in all their beauty of coloring stand out from amidst a framing of gold, silver, and pearls, in those Gothic designs of conventional type with which we are familiar. Cream, heliotrope, and eau de Nil are the tints that find most favor for foundations; they are costly, but they make a dress high class, of course, at once.

Not only are metallic beads fashionable, but a metallic thread has now been introduced into the passementeries, which does not tarnish. The colorings are light and tender—gray, green, and pink, for example—and the glitter of the material lends them brilliancy.

There are ornaments to match for securing pleats, epaulettes, and other requirements of modern dressmaking. Some of the handsomest and newest ornaments of the day are the beaded and embroidered cups, which head heavy tassels. They are intended for sash ends made of the dress material, which often now are worn at the side. They are also employed for the new mantles.

A prominent modiste has brought back a fashion that obtained when middle-aged women were young, viz., belts with sash ends at the back, entirely made of jet, and she is largely employing them on her dresses.

There is a new pinky-red terra-cotta—it must be seen to realize it—called Charles X., and this finds its way into some new lisse galons worked entirely in chenille and silk, so that very little of the ground is visible, the designs recalling an oriental carpet.

Gimps and guipures, so far as the bodices of dresses and mantles are concerned, are all in one form; a collar, epaulette, back seams, and bust trimmings in one, a glittering mass of finely cut beads. Epaulettes are fashionable, and with these united trimmings the garment, whatever it may be, cannot fail to be handsome looking. The newest are exceedingly costly, made of cord, beads, metallic thread of gold and light heliotrope tones, with which almost imperceptibly blended are pale greens and blue, only apparent when you look closely into them.

The pattern consists of a large leaflet connected with cord, according to the exigencies of the design, and to go with it there is a garniture for the basque. For evening gowns the same sort of trimming is made in gold and pearls, and there is nothing prettier on a soft cream satin.

Large white satin bows are now placed on the shoulder like the old shoulder knot, and these are secured with the same pearl and gold ornaments.

After all these magnificent articles of attire, you will perhaps like to hear of a trifle, and an acceptable one, in trimmings—frillings for the neck, and cuffs of dresses made of loops of narrow satin ribbon, with picot edges. These are generally white, but can be had in other colors.

Nearly, if not quite, all the new ribbons have picot edges, and the old-fashioned glace ribbons are coming in again with the thick rope edge.

Edges of contrasting color, crepe gauze ribbons in somewhat bright colorings, with tiny motifs in brocade, stripes in different colors and materials, such as velvet on silk, with sometimes chenille edges, Chine velvet ribbons, and frise patterns, are the features in the newest ribbons of the summer, and an immense deal of narrow satin ribbon is being used for rosettes, which are applied in millinery and on gowns in various ways.

Bands of fancy ribbon are used on tea and evening gowns as trimmings, but the cloth appliques are newer worked with gold and other metallic threads and beads.

Fringes are much worn, many of them having divisible ring headings, worked in beads. Detachable ornaments are in fashion; these are economical and convenient, for you need buy only the exact quantity required, and can apply it in various ways. Some of the fringes show ornaments made of cork balls, covered with beads and silk, and are very light.

Fine steel trimmings of all kinds are now greatly in favor, and no wonder; they are bright and show off nearly all colors to advantage. Panels of dresses, long V-shaped pieces for bodices, epaulettes and galons are all to be had in this fine steel work. It looks well with revers of mousse velvet on a white satin dress.

Summer dresses will be made with much Swiss embroidery in ecru and white on net, and there is an evident inclination to use this class of work in place of lace.

There is a new lace—Aquitaine—with a clear, silky ground and a thick pattern in silk, like coral; and colored silk laces, which can now be had in every shade, are employed for all kinds of purposes.

Striped tulles are new, and there are some novel makes of crepe, which is a most fashionable material for ball gowns.

Crepe de Chine marabout is a charming fabric, with a feathery surface, used for trimming in millinery and evening gowns, and the silk striped crepe lisse and aerophane are also much used.

The prettiest chapeaux now being shown in Paris are the small and dressy capotes intended for wearing at the theatre, and which are suitable for theatrical matinees, morning concerts, bazaars, and the many occasions when these dainty little coiffures may be appropriately worn.

A charming little model, in the small pointed shape so becoming above a pretty face, has the crown covered with narrow flounces of white silk gauze embroidered with colored silks; the brim is formed of a fancy plait of beige straw; a bunch of pink roses without foliage is placed in front under the open brim, and a little bow of light brown satin ribbon forms a coquettish aigrette on the left side of the capote.

A new shape that is likely to be fashionable, as it is eminently becoming, has a high crown like a hat, and a turned-up brim deeper in front than at the back; this is put on the head like a bonnet, however, and supplied with lace or ribbon strings fastened under the chin.

It is usually made in fine black straw, the brim being covered with plush to match the dress or in any becoming color, partly veiled with lace. The trimming consists of a double upright pleating of lace in front, with flowers to match the plush in the centre between the lace pleatings.

A very lady-like bonnet for a married lady has the crown covered with Chantilly lace falling in a point in front, over a wreath of gold colored chrysanthemums, supported and kept in place by a trellis-work of jet beads. At the top is a pleating of lace, with a bunch of white lilac and two or three yellow orchids rising above it. The strings are of Chantilly lace.

Odds and Ends.

THE MAKING OF ENTREES.

(Concluded.)

Probably many of you will say that the cost of a truffle sufficiently big to cut slices from as large as a cock's comb would be very considerable. This is undoubtedly the case; and supposing you cannot afford to buy more than what are called quarter-bottles of truffles, can proceed as follows; but remember if the truffles are only used for ornamental purposes, they ought to last a long time and not all be used up for one dish:

Take a little piece of truffle and cut a thin piece as finely as possible with a very sharp knife, so as to make a quantity of little black specks as big around as a small pea, and as thin, say, as a five dollar note. You will find it is wonderful how many "black specks" you can make out of one thin piece.

Now place the red tongue and white cocks' combs around the dish alternately, and take these little black specks and place one on the middle of each round on the outer edge of the comb. They will, so to speak, resemble the eyes in a peacock's tail.

Again, supposing you do not feel justified in running into the expense of buying a bottle of cocks' combs. If you have the remains of a tongue in the house, or even the lean part of a ham, and also the remains of a cold chicken or turkey, or even a piece of roast or boiled veal, by means of a tin cutter, which can be bought for a few cents, you can stamp out pieces of thin white chicken, turkey or veal, and pieces of red ham or tongue. If you use a cutter, of course all the pieces will be exactly the same size, and the dish will look very neat.

In order to bring myself down to the requirements of all families, I would suggest to the housekeeper to make a preliminary experiment with a dish, say of minced beef.

Suppose you have by you the remains of a piece of boiled salt beef, and a bit of veal cutlet. The outside of the beef is red, the inside of the cutlet is white. With a sharp knife cut some thin slices of red beef and white veal. Take your cutter and stamp them out, mince up the remains of the beef and veal together, flavor it in the ordinary way with a little chopped onion, or what I would personally prefer, a bead of garlic. Make the mince of a proper consistency, that is, like properly prepared mortar, and not little lumps of meat swimming in gravy. Now place your little stamped pieces of red and white around the edge of the dish. Make the mince oval on the top and pile it up, and use two pieces of red, and two white of these cut-up shapes as a centre ornament. A tiny piece of green parsley might be placed in the middle.

Of course these little red and white imitation cocks' combs would look a great deal nicer if we had little black pieces of truffle around the edge, but in a dish of this kind of course truffle is out of the question. But there is a very simple substitute; in fact, for a dish of hash or mince it is, if anything, superior in flavor. Take a pickled walnut, and pick out rather a hard one, then the outside of the walnut can be used for making black specks. Pickled walnuts are often used for flavoring hashed beef; and in a dish of hash, or mince, a few whole pickled walnuts may be placed around the edge as an ornament; or the pickled walnuts can be cut in half, as too much is to be avoided. Take the walnuts out of the pickle half an hour before they are used, and place them on a cloth or piece of blotting paper, and let them drain, as you must avoid making the hash or mince acid.

In almost all entrees we should be perfectly helpless unless we had some good brown gravy to start with. This must be always made the day before. It is no use attempting to make an entree and beginning to made the gravy on the same day as the entree is required to be served.

In making good brown gravy the first thing necessary is a piece of knuckle of veal. Suppose you take, say, three pounds of knuckle of veal; chop it up, bone and all, with a chopper, and place it in a good sized saucepan with an onion, a carrot, the trimmings of a head of celery, and a handful of parsley—the onion may be stuck with a few cloves, say six. Fill the saucepan with cold water, and let it simmer by the side of the fire. If possible, add to it the trimmings of a ham, a small ham-bone, or even a bacon-bone that contains no fat. After the whole has boiled or simmered (for it does not matter allowing it to boil after the first two hours) for the best part of a day, let it boil away until there is only a quart of liquor left. Then strain it off into a basin, cover it over with a cloth, and let it settle. I would advise the cook now to add a quart of fresh water to what is left in the saucepan, and put it on, and make what is called a "second stock." When the quart of gravy that has been poured off is quite cold, it will be a firm jelly, with a good deal of sediment at the bottom, but the top part will be bright enough for practical purposes after the fat has been removed. Of course it can be cleared with white of egg. The upper part of the stock should be used for the bright glaze, and the bottom part for the brown gravy. The brown gravy should be thickened with brown flour, or flour made brown by being fried in butter, which is called brown roux. The other can be made thick with arrowroot.

Confidential Correspondents.

ARM.—**The only way to determine the** point is to try. The medical officer will quickly arrive at a conclusion when he examines you. It may or may not be of moment.

A. C.—**It would take up more space than** we could spare to inform you as to the different religious beliefs of all the United States presidents. Consult a history of this country.

LANGLEY.—**We cannot give the requisite** space for describing the construction of electric bells. You had better buy a set; they are to be had, ready for fixing, at very moderate prices, of any dealer in scientific apparatus.

M. N.—**Give your friend the full benefit** of any doubt in her favor. You cannot expect perfection in anyone, and it is possible that a person—especially a young person—may have been led into telling an untruth, and yet not be unworthy of confidence, in the main.

INQUIRER.—**The Duke of Buckingham** served up at table, for the entertainment of King Charles I. of England, a pie which, on being opened, was found to contain Jeffrey Hudson, who afterwards became well known as the court dwarf. Sir Jeffrey was a very small man, but as the pie allowed him room to move about, it must have been a very large pie.

WISDOM-TOOTH.—**The last teeth far back** at either extremity of the upper and lower jaws are thus called, because they are not cut until adult life. It has been said that these particular teeth were destined to be cut so late in order that grown-up folk might be able to sympathise with infants in the sufferings incidental to teething. However this may be, it is in many instances with great pain and even a slight attack of illness that these teeth are cut.

TEUFEL.—**We cannot afford space to** answer all your questions. Probably most people would agree with neither of the estimates you quote as to which is the greatest of Tennyson's poems. It is impossible to measure poetry with a foot-rule, or to weigh the "Idylls" against "Maud" or the "Princess" in a grocer's balance. It is quite a matter of taste which we prefer; but, as far as general opinion goes, "In Memoriam" is usually considered as the high-water mark of Tennyson's genius.

S. D.—**Our opinion, based on your statement** of the case, is that the young lady flirted with you in a very heartless way. But you can do nothing about it, except to cut her acquaintance quietly. Any action on your part which would bring the matter to the notice of the public would tend to make you the laughing stock of the community, and would do the young lady no harm. She could easily defend herself against your complaints. When a man gets the worst of it in such a matter, he must bear his disappointment with silence and dignity.

B. A.—**You seem to be making too much** of a lady's trifling gestures and looks. Your best plan will be to write a manly respectful letter, and tell her the truth regarding the state of your affections. No woman was ever yet offended with a man for loving her, and you may just as well know the truth. At the worst, it will be better for you to have a certainty than to muddle your time away as you are now doing. By-the-way, take care of your spelling. An educated lady would certainly wince if you wrote her a letter like that now before us.

READER.—**That such a forged document** once existed is indeed possible enough. During the earlier centuries of Christianity, forgeries of the sort and other so-called pious frauds were unfortunately very common. For example, there existed a letter said to have been addressed by Agbarus, King of Edessa, to our Lord, which was in reality a pure concoction, unnappily designed by some mistaken person who imagined that he was thus adding support to the evidences of Christianity. Of a similar sort is the story that Tiberius, moved by Pilate's letter, proposed to the Roman Senate that our Lord should be admitted upon the roll of their recognized gods. Such absurd attempts to add, as men thought, to the historical bases of our religion are simply puerile. Several passages have been similarly foisted into the text of Josephus, the Jewish historian, all having reference to the life of Christ; but these are now universally rejected by modern critics. Nothing can be more improbable than that Pilate should ever have written such a letter.

M.—**What is called the "standard gauge"** of railways and locomotives is the result of accident and custom. Before the introduction of steam, the old tramways or horse railroads of England, were four feet eight inches and a half broad. When Stephenson, the inventor of the locomotive, built his first engine, he constructed it to run on a tramway, and so made it the same breadth—four feet eight inches and a half. Having made one locomotive on that gauge, he naturally made others like it; and the steam railway tracks were constructed on the same gauge, to fit the locomotives. In that way four feet eight inches and a half became the standard gauge for railway tracks and locomotives in England, and the same gauge has been adopted in most other countries. Other gauges have been and still are used, some of which are less than the standard and others greater. A six-foot gauge is the widest that has been extensively used. Some roads have a gauge of four feet eight inches and three-quarters, others of four feet nine inches, and others still of four feet ten inches. Some theorists tried a seven-foot gauge for awhile, but it was found to be undesirable for various reasons.

PALE.—**Good talkers are merely people** who forget themselves in the general thread of the conversation, who are not anxious to create a sensation or to be considered clever, but who say what they have to say because they are genuinely interested. Forget yourself, and all will go well with you. You will no longer be a wet blanket, but an agreeable companion. Then you have a lover who, you think, feels you are no companion for him, and yet he is too good and kind to let you see it intentionally. But you fancy nevertheless that you detect it. Why, this is just the same thing over again in another form! Hundreds of women make themselves unhappy by fancying as much without any sufficient reason whatever. Take our advice. Trust the lover you have been so long engaged to, and do not give him up for a mere indefinite, uncertain fancy. A man too good and kind to let you see it, is sure to be too good and kind to love you any the less because your good looks, as you believe, are fast disappearing. Taking your general state of mind into consideration, we are strongly inclined to suspect however that you are still every bit as pretty as ever. Evidently you are a person too much given to self-depreciation.